

LEOPOLD WARNDORF.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

HENRY SUMMERSETT,

AUTHOR OF

THE MAD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN, &c. &c. &c.

Imogen. “ Why did you throw me from you ?

“ Think that you are upon a rock, and now

“ Throw me again !”

Posthumus. “ Hang there, like fruit, my soul,

“ Till the tree perish !”

CYMBELINE.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following sheets is unwilling to obtrude on the public any superfluous matter; but he conceives that his reputation, if any has, or ever

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shall

shall be awarded him, demands a few words by way of preface.

Leopold Warndorf was, about two years ago, cast in a dramatic mould; it contained characters which have since been put aside, and attempts at humour which will not be found in these volumes.—“Oh! that I could see the inimitable Kemble assuming the passions of the Marquis—that I could hear the exquisite tones of Mrs. Siddons swelling with the
rage

rage and resentment of Victoria ;
and the almost magic voice of
Mrs. Jordan repeating the hopes
and the sorrows of the simple
Antoinette !"—These words I have
not unfrequently uttered. The
reader may smile at my vanity ;—
I have smiled at it myself. My
ambition faded : the fancied laugh
of the Manager was a death-
blow ; and I put aside my papers,
because I would not be reminded
of my own folly and presump-
tion.

At length I brought them to the light again, and at intervals began to form them into a Novel. I changed the scene of action from France to Germany, gave new names and titles to my characters, and had actually written the first volume, when I went to see the representation of a new Play, which deservedly became a favourite with the town. I was agitated by the excellence of the performance : and when I left the Theatre, I fancied there was a great
fimilitude

similitude between the drama and what I had then written and designed. Self-assured, however, of my honesty, I proceeded in my work, which I completed in the manner as it is now presented to the public; and I shall never think myself more indebted to the German poet, than he is to me. Indeed the likeness has since appeared to me *very faint*; and I am persuaded that my book contains not a sentence that may be traced

traced in the author to whom I have alluded.

It may be said by some, that, even in this short appeal, there is much ado about nothing ; and the sense of my own feebleness prevents me from aiming at such a stupendous giant as Kotzebue.

But I know the prejudices arising from comparison ; and I do not think it improbable, but that a certain set of monthly critics (I speak not of the *Monthly Reviewers*),

may,

may, in some after season, assure their readers that my book bears a resemblance, though such an one as *by no means is favourable to the imitator*, to Peregrine Pickle, or to the facetious Humphry Clinker.

Hamlet. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius. It is back'd like a weasel.

Hamlet. Or, like a whale?

Polonius. Very like a whale.

Some of the inconsistencies of the Danish Courtier may be found

in the ingenious critics of the eighteenth century ; among whom I shall not be surpris'd to discover those who will consider me as a pigmy, too diminutive to be bound on the wheel of torture.

LEOPOLD WARNDORF.

Isabella to Baron Altenburg.

ALLOW me to offer you my congratulations on a late happy occasion—congratulations which flow from the heart, not merely from the tongue. Coming from me, and on such circumstances, they should be unbounded,

many, ardent—animated by fancy, enforced by sincerity : they should give to you and to me an equal pleasure. And do you not enjoy pleasure, fascinating pleasure ? Do you not sink on the bosom of love, and hourly clasp beauty in your arms ?—Yes, these joys are your's, Baron. And am I without *my* felicities ? No, no ; I am happy in the completion of my hopes. I have attained my wishes, been favoured in my expectations, indulged in every——But hold ! your happiness is the subject ; let me not, therefore, unseasonably talk of my own.

You have married, and I have pondered on the circumstance : you have married——

married—hear the prayer that I utter for you:—

May God place a curse on you for ever! on every thing that concerns, on every thing that belongs to you—on your wife, on your children! May he bring poverty to your house, misery to your heart, and affliction to your body! May your wife be barren! If she has issue, let it be marked by ugliness and disease! But, for a final curse, may life be misery to you, death excruciating, and hell an eternal torment!

Villain! monster! devil! how did you dare to use me thus? Do you

remember, Sir, who I was, and who I am? I sacrificed the opinion of the world and every thing to you; and when the finger of derision and contempt has been pointed to me, I have scorned it on your account, and gloried in that connection with you which the world loudly called my shame.

What if I had deserted you, and fled to the arms of another, would you not have upbraided, scorned, cursed me? Why then should I not upbraid, scorn, and curse you for your treachery and hypocrisy? But my lips shall be sealed on this subject for ever. Remember, however, that my
enmity

enmity will not sleep: at some future day I will be revenged, amply revenged. My malice will ever be waking; rest not, therefore, in security: I will plot mischief, and execute it. The law shall not reach me; your power shall dwindle into impotence; and if any horrid disaster should befall you, regard it as the revenge of

Isabella Marilli.

The Baron to Isabella.

YOUR frantic letter has reached me; the language of it shocks me. I

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am,

am, however, inclined to view it as a burst of frenzy, and cannot think but that, when reason returns, you will regard it with horror and repentance. Were you not fearful of having your hand stiffened by the anger of Heaven when it was employed in giving characters to your dreadful execrations? Did the hyena possess the powers of the human voice, it could not, even in its most savage moments, express any thing more shocking and atrocious.

Isabella, I know the strength of your mind, the fervour of your passions, and the irritability of your disposition :
but

but there have been times when your sentiments have charmed me—when love has been predominant in your bosom, and when your temper has followed mine through all its mazes, and shewn itself with superiority.

Hear me, Isabella—I entreat you to hear me with patience. I think I can extenuate the crime of which I am accused, for my own conscience has already acquitted me of it.

You will remember that seventeen years have passed since we first met in Italy. Finding you regardless of certain forms and establishments observed in society, I began an acquaintance

with you of such a nature, I conceived, as the dissatisfaction of either of us might readily dissolve. I admit that I was the first object of your choice, and also that I have never had any reason to suppose that I was only a sharer of your affections;—you yielded to me, and surely I made equal sacrifices.

Did not my father on his death-bed declare that my connection with you had been the most severe of his afflictions? Did not my uncle, his surviving brother, dispose of his immense property to enrich shrines, and to fatten Monks, in order that he might reduce to poverty the man who refused
to

to abandon you? After that, limited as I was, did I not for several years attach myself to you, support you with elegance, resent each injury that was offered to you, and make you an object of greater consideration than myself?

My conduct and propensities have been of a very faulty nature; they led me into such extravagances, that I lately found ruin staring at and menacing me. My fortune was reduced to the lowest state, and I was almost wild when thinking on the means of re-establishing it. I thought of marriage, but at the same time thought of you, Isabella, and was pained. I had many internal struggles, and the combat between love and necessity was

obstinate ;—the latter, however, convincing me that it were better to place you in single independence, than plunge you into the distress that threatened me, I resolved to persevere in my new-formed intention ; and, during my absence from you, which you so forcibly urged me to account for, and which the want of fortitude prevented me from doing, I selected a woman, young, beautiful, and rich. I married her ; and I confess to you that I love her. The passion which I entertained for you must, if I wish for happiness, be suppressed—it is my duty to conquer it : but if you will in its place allow me to substitute friendship, it shall attend you till my heart grows cold in my bosom.

Your

Your threats, Isabella, are futile ; made in a moment of passion, they are, I hope, already forgotten. Retire from Vienna, and you shall receive an annual sum sufficient for your support : make a proposal yourself ; let me know your wishes on the subject, and I will readily, cheerfully accede to them. Remember, however, that you must retire from Vienna ; Isabella and Christiana must not be near to me at one time, lest my new-formed principles should be destroyed, and my old habits again imperceptibly steal on me.

Your cool judgment, not your passions, must direct you ; and I think,

Ifabella, however severe are your invectives, I think it is not possible for you to hate me—to curse me *twice* ! Necessity has of late been my directress ; and, as my heart did not wilfully stray from you, pity and forgive me.

One subject I have not yet touched upon—our daughter, the child of our love :—God bless her ! I am *indeed* her father—I feel it, I feel it this moment in my soul. She is now sixteen—sweet, blooming, beautiful ! Ifabella, yield her up to me ; I will place her with an accomplished lady, who, I am convinced, will give the finest polish to this rich diamond.

I will see her often—you shall see her at certain periods ; and when she arrives at the age of twenty, Christiana's dowery shall provide a fortune for Isabella's daughter. Think of this seriously. Kiss my dear girl for me, and prepare her to accompany the person whom I shall send for her in the course of a few days.

And now, Isabella, I am writing a painful word—Farewel! I see you at this moment ; your rage is hushed, you are sad, dejected ; you pity, you love

Altenburg.

Isabella

Isabella to the Baron.

IT was my intention, Baron, to have remained silent after having written my last letter to you ; but it is necessary I should address you again. The winds laugh at the poplar that bows at their passing ; you, probably, exult with the idea of having bent me down with your consequence : but you are deceived in respect to my state ; my soul is still great in its monarchy, and as much as ever despises your perfidy and hypocrisy.

Your

Your last epistle has caused me to smile, but not to weep; no, Sir, I have done with sorrow;—if I must be tormented, it shall be by active pain, not by that dull anguish which makes the sufferer contemptible.

You have not yet convinced me but that you are a proud, insulting monster—a selfish being, who, for his own preservation, or for the pleasures of a dainty mind, scruples not to sacrifice his honour, and the peace of those to whom he is forsworn. A spider, hideous and venomous as yourself, would spin a stronger web than that of your arguments; flimsy in its texture, and sorry in its construction,

tion, a breath, a vapour will destroy it.

Baron, I once loved as much as I now despise you. I have blessed you a thousand and a thousand times; why have you given me cause to curse you eternally? From a passage in your letter, it might be inferred that you stepped from poverty by your late pleasing gradations, merely to save *me* from it. Worthy man! I want a new heart to thank you for it.

To be near you was once to be happy. In the days of our acquaintance, had you, in consequence of crime, been sent to any distant country
to

to be made a common drudge, or to the galleys, or to the mines, I would have been your associate prisoner. In the winter, I would have retained only one of my coverings, and warmed your limbs with the others; and in the summer, my hand should have removed each drop of sweat as soon as it started upon your brow. These are not the boastings of romance; but whatever they are, they shall sink, and be forgotten.

You have been very elaborate in stating your compulsions and your motives for withdrawing yourself from my society, and given yourself much unnecessary trouble in repeating stale incidents.

incidents. Sir, did you conceive yourself as appeasing an incensed prostitute, or as pleading to the ear of ignorance and stupidity?

Insulting man! do you not remember that I am allied to a family, the honour of which was not blemished till I foolishly attached myself to you and your fortunes? My father cursed me, my mother abhorred me, my sister turned from me, my friends contemned me!—Wretch, wretch! all this they did, and thus was I lost to them, because I loved, and so madly gave myself up to you. Preach no more, then, on necessity—my dare was the greater; but your's is the triumph

triumph over misplaced love and infatuation.

Baron, I will leave Vienna when I please ; I will have no stipulations. If my continuance here can either pain or perplex you, I will be rooted.—You will provide for my necessities! — *You!* I would hunt with dogs in the street for food, beg it from door to door, supplicate every passing stranger for charity, rather than receive the forriest pittance from you—famine, perish first. I reject all your services ; and again avow myself your implacable enemy.

Our

Our daughter !—Think you I will give her up to you—that I will entrust her with the man who betrayed and deserted her mother, in order that she may receive a provision from the dowery of Christiana ? Pitiful man ! to kill her would be better than to betray her.

On hearing the news of your marriage, I sent for her ;—she stood before me as a mark of my shame : she at that moment seemed to bear a stronger likeness to you than ever. I struck her with violence, and made her bleed !—Oh my beloved child ! pardon the action of a frenzied mother ! I kissed off all the blood, and died my lips.

lips. I love her fifty thousand times more than ever. You should have my heart from my bosom rather than my adored child. What if I had murdered her? God would have made *you* answerable for the crime, and acquitted me. I struck my daughter!— Oh I shall remember it on my death-bed!

Altenburg, you are deceived; I have no more love for you than for any of the brute creation. My passions may, in some degree, subside; but the spirit of revenge I will not attempt to conquer.

Isabella.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

SOME few years ago, dear Count, I sent you my congratulations on your having attained a wife ; and in your answer you laughingly wished that I would afford you the opportunity of shewing to me an equal civility on a similar occasion ;—the time to felicitate me is arrived, for I am married.

About a week has elapsed since I became the husband of a charming woman, with whom I hope to live in true happiness and enjoyment, forgetful of the errors of youth, and of the follies

follies of riper years, and in directing my views towards such objects as an improved and corrected conscience shall point out to me. So have I resolved and sworn myself to do, and I daily discover a growing stability in my mind, which assists me in my best projects; and from which I infer that I shall be enabled to tread the paths of honour and of rectitude without deviating into those of dissipation and extravagance, in which I have too long been an unwary and idle traveller.

Many of my follies, which my late father so much lamented, and which, in his latter days, added poignancy to his

his afflictions, originated even from his own inattention ; for when I was a mere boy, he not only allowed me a free command of money, but prompted me to a profuse expenditure, unwisely thinking that the liberality of the hand would create liberality of heart.

Sent into the world at a very early age, the good precepts which had been laid down for my edification, were soon put to flight ; and my young companions laughed at my morality, till I myself began to ridicule it. Italy is not the soil for virtue ; and thither I was sent, under the direction of a tutor, who frequented the bath of Venus more often than the temple

temple of Minerva ; and who would rather step into the steamy refectory of Epicurus, than into the schools of philosophy, though to my father he had shewn himself a stoic, and animadverted on the practice of morality as earnestly as on the culpability of the minor and elder vices. A punishment of the greatest severity ought to be inflicted on such dangerous hypocrites ; so, however, at that time I did not think. I regarded him as an obliging, accommodating person, and was glad that he would not only allow, but also partake of the gaieties of life.

I was scarcely nineteen when I became acquainted with Isabella, who

from that period, till very lately, continued to reside with me, and by whom, you know, I have a charming daughter.

My companion was a most extraordinary young woman; she was held as a singular character; and her peculiar sentiments almost entirely excluded her from female society: such society, however, she did not court. She had the mind of a man, combined of judgment, wit, and fancy: in associating with the opposite sex she was happy; and being in some degree discountenanced by her family, she resigned herself up to me, and our gratification was mutual.

At

At certain different periods I have proposed to marry her, when she has assured me that her happiness was complete, and that neither law nor custom could possibly improve it. Isabella was deficient of property; and for the first eight years I lived with such freedom, that I found the inconvenience of it: and my father and family were so disgusted with my habits of life, from which, however, I was not to be diverted, that they made my fortune considerably narrower.

When they left the world, I found my expectations greatly baffled; and I confess that I regarded them as rigid

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moralists,

moralists, who, naturally too coldly constituted to participate in pleasure themselves, churlishly thought my trifling indulgences serious vices, and all my pleasing gaieties unpardonable levities. Even my external mourning was limited : the world soon received me again, and its pleasures I pursued with increased avidity. To be coldly prudent I thought unnecessary and absurd ; to be gay, and to seek for pleasant varieties, I only seemed to live. My mind, therefore, seldom dwelt upon my father ; and my cynic uncle, who had removed all his gold from my grasp, I blotted out of my memory.

From

From thoughtless expenditure, I ran to extravagance; dissipation was sweeping away my property; and the pleasure that I courted, and in which Isabella joined, would not, I conceived, be succeeded by any degree of pain, or of repentance. But I was deceived; an attachment to gaming, and a series of ill fortune, made me a complete bankrupt; and I was reduced almost to poverty, though Isabella had no suspicion of my circumstances being even impaired.

Dear Count, I am afraid that I have already tired you with the repetition of my follies; with some of them you were before acquainted, but the worst

of them I have hitherto concealed from you. I will pass hastily over the subject by merely saying that the reduction of my fortune and consequence I had not sufficient philosophy to withstand—it tortured, almost distracted me; and I reflected seriously, as at such times most prodigals do, on my extreme folly and culpability.

Forming an excuse of business, I quitted Isabella for two months, and retired into the country, having previously, but with considerable difficulty, bound my most serious creditors to a temporary forbearance and secrecy.

An

An accusing conscience haunted me : my eyes were no longer misty ; and the conduct of my father and my uncle now appeared to me to be the result of caution, rather than of vindictive malice. I went to the house of a friend, at some distance from Vienna, and to that friend I made known all my indiscretions, which created pain, and even drew tears from me. He pitied me when he found my repentance sincere, and endeavoured to console me with good hopes. His fortune was not very large, but he generously tendered me a part of it ; and having begged me to pardon him for his freedom, he censured many of my past faults, and

laid down to me a regular plan of life,¹⁷⁶¹ to which I seriously attended.

He advised me to re-establish my fortune by marriage, and introduced me to a lady of birth and education, seriously advising me to make myself as agreeable to her as possible. I thought of Isabella with pain, and at first could not listen to his advice; but my ideas wandering again into their late perplexing track, I agreed to endeavour to insinuate myself into the favour of Christiana, and to aim at securing her affections.

This task, however, I was scarcely equal to;—Isabella opposed it, ho-
nour

nour opposed it: still I carried on my designs with all possible ingenuity. I confess I used many little artifices; which, in the course of two months, I discovered had secured me her heart. I now really loved her, and resolved to offer myself to her;—I did so, and was accepted. But before I could do this, I had a thousand internal struggles; necessity, however, urged me on, and my friend applauded and encouraged me.

Christiana's fortune was very large, and at her free disposal. Unwilling that so young and excellent a woman should be deceived in her object, I stated to her my reduced wealth,

laid my heart and its transgressions open to her, and ingenuously shewed myself as I had been, and then was. She thanked me for my openness with a sweetness that reached, and almost melted my soul; smilingly offered to countenance the daughter of Isabella, after she had been brought into notice by an amiable female friend; and entreated me to appropriate a fund for the use of her mother, my late companion.

The sentiments of Christiana raised my admiration; these truths which, as a man of honour, I thought proper to make known to her, and which many women would have shut their
ears

ears against, she placidly listened to ; and in the plan of her own gratification, she did not neglect the happiness of those with whom I had been so long, so intimately, and I may add, so dearly connected.

I married ; received the congratulations of my friend, and carried my lovely bride to Vienna just four months after I had left it ; and, at her earnest request, immediately paid those creditors, the fear of whom had driven me from that city.

I was preparing to apprise Isabella of my marriage, and to make such pecuniary arrangements for her as my
c 6 friendship

friendship prompted me—(*friendship!* perhaps it was something more), when I received from her a letter, written in a style of frenzy, and not only intimating a knowledge of my union, but also a rooted hatred to me, expressing many curses, and declaring eternal enmity.

Though her letter led me almost to suppose that she had been deprived of reason, I immediately answered it. Feeling most sensibly for her situation, I endeavoured to sooth and tranquilize her; and, after making some proposals for her future accommodation, entreated her to yield her child up to me. This has only served to strengthen

her resentment. She replies that she detests me, that she despises assistance, and that she will not part from her daughter. Her letters agitated and affected me; for my own tranquillity I put them into the flames. I fear, Count, that I have—I ought not to proceed.

I trust that the present storm will soon be hushed by serenity, and that I and Christiana shall be uninterruptedly happy:—she is a noble creature, and I cannot love her too well; she wins upon me in a moment, and in an hour she absolutely fascinates. I must be compounded of all the different
vices

vices if ever I abuse her love and generosity.

Oh dear Stendal! I think I am now secure in virtue and in happiness. The sea-boy falling from the tallest mast, and caught midway by a fellow-mariner, cannot more rejoice at his preservation than I do. And yet poor Isabella!—my sweet daughter! Count, surely I may, in some degree, still love the former; for what is the difference between love and friendship? and as to the latter, not even Christiana is dearer to the heart, of

Altenburg.

Count

Count Stendal to Baron Altenburg.

AN account of your wedding, dear Altenburg, had reached me before I received your letter ; which, however, does not prevent me from wishing you every possible felicity, and much permanent happiness. Rumour has been of late very busy with your name ; and in the loquacity of her gossipings, I must add, she has not been tender of your reputation. Her accusations against you are numerous ; and she has given out that with your mistress you have been cruel and perfidious,

fidious, and with your wife designing and hypocritical.

These are the journeying stories of the day—the tales of those who are better pleased in attending to the concerns of other people than to their own. You must not be angry with me for introducing them here, nor regard me with resentment till I join the gabbling party of your censurers.

And yet I am tempted to risk your displeasure in speaking of the subject to which you have led me : you have not, it is true, enquired the nature of my sentiments ; the tenor of your own language, however, encourages me to
treat

treat you with little ceremony, and to speak freely of those matters concerning which you have been so unreserved. You have indeed, Altenburg, laid yourself very open to me; the causes that you assign for your early deviations, have considerable weight; and the character of your tutor I hold to be odious, and also know to be just.

I have at different periods taken some pains in examining the qualities of which you are composed, and many times lamented that habit should have destroyed what Nature had so well and generously executed. I must not forget that I am addressing a man equal
to

to me in years and understanding—who was my schoolfellow, my earliest associate, and the merry companion of my liveliest days. I nevertheless wish to deal frankly with you, and to speak in the same manner that you have in past times freely sanctioned.

Your first acquaintance with Isabella was unfortunate, your closer connection still more unhappy. To begin at the age of nineteen too!—mere boy and girl; and yet, forsooth, in your own opinions you were philosophers! Isabella was a deluded woman; but though she continued so long in concubinage, I cannot rimple my brows at her according to the rules

rules of our rigid moralists—I cannot help pitying her.

Altenburg, you should not have deserted her : your errors were mutual, your pleasures mutual ; and your distresses ought to have been the same. You stepped together into guilt ; you did not take her stained from its school. You admit her fidelity for sixteen years—that she was wise, tender, affectionate, and that she brought you a lovely daughter. Such a woman I cannot call a prostitute, and such a woman you ought not to have wronged.

I wonder

I wonder not at her present distraction. Remember, Altenburg, that you admit she has never offended you since you offered to make her your wife, and which proposal she did not catch at, merely because she was secure in your love and honour. You have done wrong:—marry to remove your embarrassments! Why did you not apply to me? Did I not once accept of a loan from you, remain a long time your debtor, and even pay you by instalments? Why then, in the days of my prosperity, could you not condescend to ask me for a similar assistance? I can scarcely pardon this pride.

Dear

Dear Altenburg, whatever harshness this letter bespeaks, I am most truly your friend ; I wish sincerely for your happiness, and for the happiness of Christiana, of whom you have drawn so lovely a picture. Your situation is peculiar, and you must cautiously frame your actions according to it, or your felicity will pass over as a vision. You must not trust yourself with Isabella even for a moment ; there would be most imminent danger in it. Do her justice as far as you can ; and retire for a while with your wife into the country.

Though you have forgotten your old vows, remember, I conjure you,
your

your new ones ; those which are made in the open air, ought to be as religiously observed as those uttered at the altar. I hope you are firm, my friend, in your resolutions ; and yet I am almost afraid to trust such a heart as your's. I again entreat you to leave Vienna : I shall be prevented by a visit that I am going to make, to offer you an invitation ; but I wish you to write to me frequently, and to direct to me at W——. Happiness to the friend of

Stendal.

To

To Isabella.

THE enclosed bills are presented to Signora Marilli with all possible respect; and the person who has taken the present liberty, entreats her to do him the honour of accepting them. He hopes he shall not be accused of indelicacy in mentioning the name of Altenburg, and in assuring her that the Baron has no knowledge of, or interest in the transaction.

Stranger as the writer of this is to Signora Marilli, he feels a more than common interest in her fate, and in
that

that of her lovely daughter—an interest which no selfish or improper view has created, and from which nothing more than their accommodation and happiness is expected.

If the Signora should be returning to Italy before her supplies from that country arrive, and will still further oblige an unknown friend by allowing him to do away that inconvenience, he will be most truly happy, and any sum may be readily commanded by her. She is entreated to give the stranger an answer, directing it to Mr. H——, at the post-office at B——; and again assured that her acquiescence to his request will be in the greatest degree pleasing,

pleasing, and also that the obligation will be ever considered to rest on him alone.

To Count Stendal.

ABOUT two years ago, you, my Lord, spent a few days with Baron Altenburg, a man who was once known, and dearly loved by me. I was then an inmate of the same house; and whenever in your company, the goodness of your heart, the richness of your mind, and the delicacy of your manners could not fail to impress, and to shew me your genuine merit.

The peculiarity of my situation quickened my remarks on society; I endeavoured to discriminate as justly as possible, and I think it was not often that I looked with the eyes of prejudice. I deal not in flattery, Count, but must say that your manners and deportment excited the admiration of Altenburg's mistress, which was my worldly appellation.

You may, perhaps, remember that you once presented me with a written copy of some beautiful verses; it was made by your own hand, and conjecturing it was also your own muse that gave birth to the ideas, I have till this hour preserved the lines, and very

often read them with increasing admiration.

Some few days ago I received an anonymous letter, enclosing notes of value, and speaking, I think, the language of Count Stendal. My surprise at first was more than common; and it was not till after many readings that I thought the characters of the hand familiar to my eye. Perusing it still more seriously, and thinking of your verses, I immediately compared them, discovered them to be the same, and knew that he who styled himself a stranger, was the generous Count Stendal.

My Lord, my Lord! your kindness has found a passage to my heart, which is impatient to pour its whole store of gratitude before you. I cannot select words, I cannot study a dress for language—but indeed I thank you, most sincerely thank you.

You must, however, pardon me for returning that part of your packet which I hold the least valuable: the bills you will receive again with this, but your letter I retain; and having stamped it on my memory, shall place it foremost in the depository of friendship. I may hereafter be very poor; and if poverty *can* make me

humble, I may then probably apply to
so excellent a friend and benefactor.

My daughter—Oh these foolish
tears!—my daughter will cheer me
in every distress; her smiles will irra-
diate the cells of want; and her sweet-
ness, her innocence——Dear my
Lord, beware of the professed friend-
ship of the Baron. He who can act
as Altenburg has done, can step be-
yond the devil in villany, can flur
religion, violate sanctity, spread cor-
ruption, and blow a pestilence around
him.

Deny not, my Lord, your generous
imposition, for I am sure my suspicions

do not deceive me; and though I decline your friendly services, I bless you for the motives that prompted you to offer them. I am not returning to Italy—I have no country, no friends! I am an outcast, a forlorn and miserable alien! The perfidy and cruel desertion of Altenburg may corrupt my heart, and cause it to act desperately, but shall never make it insensible to such a friend as your Lordship.

Isabella Marilli.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

STENDAL, what a letter have you written to me! I read it with horror, remorse, and anguish; and fearing to trust my eyes with it too often, I put it into the fire, and endeavoured to forget all that it contained: but every sentence, every word was impressed firmly on my mind; I alternately thought you cruel and just, unmerciful and candid.

Surely, my friend, you deal too hardly with me, and make me more culpable than I really am. You know

not the nature and extent of my late pecuniary obligations; they were too heavy and too many for friendship to bear, nor could I have applied to you to be the witness of such immense follies. Had not the demands of my creditors been immediately attended to, I must have resigned my liberty, and entered a prison; and in such a state, what could I possibly have done for the support of Isabella and her daughter? Nothing;—distress must inevitably have fallen on them, and they might have been even the victims of want.

If my arguments are fallacious, for God's sake do not endeavour to crush them!

them ! Some sense of the propriety of my conduct it is absolutely necessary to retain, or I shall be wretched indeed. I must enter no accusations against myself ; should I do so, my present state of content, which I admit is not perfect, would be fatally disturbed, and the lines of misery would be drawn over the plan that happiness has begun to sketch. If I am deceived in myself, let the illusion continue ; the veil withdrawn, my eyes might ever thereafter be open only to wretchedness and sorrow.

You cannot conceive, Stendal, in what shocking language Isabella has expressed her sentiments on my marriage ;

riage ; it is so ungovernably wild, so rude and savage, that I am fearful her intellects are affected : and yet now and then a softness glides in undesignedly, which dissolves my soul, and gives her again to my imagination, not as a friend, but as the woman who fascinated and held me in a long and willing bondage. Still she vows eternal resentment, talks of bringing something fatal on me, and obstinately refuses all manner of assistance, preferring poverty and pain, beggary and contempt, to any services which I have offered her !

Oh how miserable should I be were
she to experience the horrors of want !
and

and I know not what means she has of keeping them from her; for she has resigned every valuable to me, even her trinkets and *clothes*! and those diamonds which, in the moments of love, I purchased to give brilliancy to charms that I adored, she has sent back to me—back to, as she styles me, “the venal Baron of Altenburg.”

Count, in talking of this woman, I almost start from reason; and if I do not soon put her from my memory, I shall be unworthy of the love of Christiana, whose gentleness of conduct, and mildness of sentiment, entitle her to admiration. Is it not uncommon that a wife should be inter-

D 6

rested,

rested, and even plead for the discarded mistress of her husband? Christiana has done it with great fervour; but the subject distracting me, and an apparent indifference to the object being on my part necessary, I have entreated her to speak no more on the subject, and she promises to obey me.

The resentment of Isabella I find to be implacable; and your advising me to fly from her is judicious, and has been attended to. I must indulge no criminal affections; but it follows not that I must perforce hate where I ought not to love. I cannot do it, though she curses me so dreadfully; and as
to

to her daughter—*my* daughter—Oh Stendal, Stendal! have I reared this lovely flower merely to blast it, and tread it to the earth?

I shall leave Vienna in the course of a few days: the Baroness has an estate near Brinn; I have proposed to retire thither for a short time, and to this she readily acceded. Indeed, my dear Count, she is an exemplary woman, and I wish I could bring her to your acquaintance. I must, and will do justice to her virtues; and when I cease to love her, may I instantly cease to breathe!

In

In our proposed retirement, I shall have leisure to make my arrangements, to regulate my actions, and, I hope, to mould my heart anew. If you love me, upbraid me no more; advise me how to act in what is to come—censure me not for what is past. There is an accuser sufficiently severe in my own breast: add not, therefore, to my torture; but rather, by your better and cooler judgment, soften the distresses of your friend

Altenburg.

Augusta

Augusta Marilli to the Baron.

FATHER! Father! my dear, cruel Father! have you really deserted, and left us for ever? No, I am sure you have not: I know you will come to us again, and soon; and then, Oh how happy we shall all be! *You* cast us from your heart!—you never return again!—aye, those who say so can have but little knowledge of you. Good God! how can people tell such wicked lies? I shall really despise them for it.

And

And yet, Oh Heaven ! my mother says it is true—she says we shall never see you more—that you are married, and that your love for us has perished ! Is this, can this be true ? She also says that you hate us : do you indeed, *indeed* hate us ? Very well, father—Baron, my mother now calls you : very well, Baron ! we can both die ; and then, you know, when the grave hides us, we shall not feel your cruelty.

Do as you please, Baron ; do as—
Oh pray, pray come back to us ! My mother has been deceived—I have been deceived ; and your absence has been necessary. But so very long—well, that may be accounted for ; and
I know

I know there are not two people in the world that you love so well as your Habella and *her* and *your* Augusta, for you have said so a thousand times.

My mother is coming ; I must hide my paper, for she would hate me if she knew that I was writing to you ; and she is the only person who is dearer to me than you are—I think she is a little more dear——no, no, she is not.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Oh you have made my mother crazy ! She is certainly distracted,
and

and my terror will destroy me. I am afraid to look at her ; her actions are growing more strange, and her words I am obliged to shut my ears against.

“ Augusta,” she says, “ curse your father !”

“ Madam—mother, did I understand you ?”

“ Curse your father !”

“ Oh no ! I dare not.”

“ God—God will do it !” she exclaimed ; and then she sat a long time silent, staring at me with distorted features. Something which she had done to me before increased my fear, and I was rising to fly from her ; but she took me in her arms, and having kissed

kissed me almost a hundred times, told me I was the only link that bound her to life. Then she again relapsed into profound silence, and for a while fixed her eyes on your picture, which she held in her trembling hand. She looked dejected—more mournful still—still more miserable : she sighed, she wept, pressed the picture to her breast, and afterwards to her pale, quivering lips. Her passions again changed ; her features swelled with indignation ; she gazed with horror on the painting, and throwing it into the fire, ran shrieking out of the room, and locked herself within her own chamber. I have not seen her since ; she refuses to admit me, but
tells

tells me that she shall soon be composed again.

Father, remove the anguish of my mother, or I fear I shall soon see her raving in chains. Remove the anguish of your Augusta also by proving that the aspersions of the world are false and malevolent—at least convince her ;—I want no assurances ; for I can almost as soon believe that God himself were our foe, as that you, my dear parent, are.

How dull we were after you left us in the country ! I neglected all my walks. The weather was gloomy, and the birds were mute ; like inconsiderate

derate man, the little ingrates forgot to carol their praises to Nature because a temporary gloom succeeded their joyous summer days. Oh ingratitude! we find thee every where; I wonder thou dost not vex Heaven out of its patience.

Let me see—when shall I see my dear father again? I will give you three days, and I am sure that is a long time. To-day is Monday—that must be one; then there is Tuesday and Wednesday—and then on Thursday—Oh my heart is beating with pleasure!—on Thursday I shall be in the arms of my father, and my mother's sadness will disappear!

I will

I will make some little arrangements for the day :—you shall see my improvements in drawing ; and a piece, that I have just sketched from my own imagination, I am anxious to place before you ; it is a rude, winter scene, a wretched cottage, and two females of miserable appearance, each bearing in her arms a scanty bundle of wood, and standing near the door of the hovel. There is another object ; I have introduced a noble looking man, richly dressed, and comfortably clothed with fur ; he is gazing with compassion on the strangers, and offering to the elder woman his purse. But what do you think I have further done ? I am sure you will say it is ingenious ;

ingenious;—to the man I have given your countenance, copied with exactness from the miniature you left with us; my mother appears as one of the cottagers, and I as the other: and the resemblance of each of us is so strong, that I think you will be delighted with my performance.

I however fear there is a small fault in the eyes of my mother—they are not equal to those of the original; but you can compare them when you come to us, and direct me in giving them a darker shade. God bless my dear father till he meets his

Augusta.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

SOON after I had written my last letter, I left Vienna, and with my lovely companion journied towards our country retirement, in which we have now been nearly a fortnight established. It is indeed a lovely place ; Nature has been profuse in adorning it, and made it a residence where the philosopher might reflect unmolested, and the poet quietly indulge himself in the beautiful excursions of imagination.

But

But I have not yet discovered whether Solitude be the nurse of tranquillity, or the subtle promoter of unhappiness; whether she lulls the turbulent passions to repose, or cunningly prepares them first for mutiny, and then for open rebellion. I am still divided between hope and anxiety. In some moments a thousand blessings seem within my grasp; but in others the tear-swoln chalice of grief, and the dark, shaded vista of disappointment only meet my eye.

The war of conscience has not yet subsided: your letter, my friend, gave new vigour to it; and, till the hostilities of the mind are over, it

were folly to expect even a moment of ease. Man possesses but few fixed principles ; he is an eternally deviating object : at different periods he has certain notions and ideas, which, bearing in some degree a similarity, he foolishly calls rules : the fluctuations of his sentiments are, if he acts with privacy, only known to himself ; for his mind can always be an undetected monopolist, and those who pretend to determine on his established character, are absurdly presumptuous. In early life he may draw plans of future conduct, and for a while adhere to them ; but the consciousness of the propriety of acting rightly cannot always keep him in the performance
of

of it ; he cannot resolve himself to be what he wishes, and his perseverance is hourly, nay, almost momentarily either strengthening or relaxing.

The days of practical philosophy are, I fear, over ; and of those which are said to be past, considerable doubts and suspicions may be entertained.

A mere man of the world may sometimes be deemed a sage in his closet ; but bring him to the light, and the deception will be wondered at. I was once acquainted with a professed moralist, a lover of literature, who told me he was preparing to publish a treatise on the practice, universally and individually, of humanity ; but I

afterwards discovered that he had the soul of a negro-driver. Another person, with whom I was for a while in habits of intimacy, would melt at the dramas of Schiller and Kotzebue ; but in actual distress, I could have dug a softer heart from a quarry, or tore a better one from the breast of malice.

Man, therefore, knows little of himself, and his fellows know less of him. Such reflections as these, and the conviction of their being just, sometimes spread a gloom over my countenance, give a pang to my heart, and make me fear the birth of hidden events.

I find

I find it is necessary, as well for the happiness of my wife as of myself, that I should not suffer any appearance of dejection to hang upon me. I yesterday discovered her in tears, though she endeavoured to conceal them : concerned, and even alarmed, I ran up to, and entreated her to inform me of the cause of her sorrow, and also conjured her to banish it immediately if it depended on no very serious circumstance.

“ How can you, Altenburg,” she replied, “ expect to see pleasure in *my* countenance, when *your’s* is so gloomy and clouded ? For some days past I have observed it with extreme pain :

your frequent reveries, your absence, and your musings—all, all bespeak anxiety; and there appears a restlessness in you that I have imputed to dissatisfaction: but of what? Surely, surely *I* am not the cause of your discontent?"

"Oh no, by Heaven!" I exclaimed, pressing her to my heart; "Oh no, by Heaven, Christiana!"

In soothing her I made use of a falsehood:—begging her not to smile at the idea of periodical affections, I assured her they actually visited me, and that I had always found the approach of the autumnal season very oppressive to my spirits. But I promised

mised to bear against them ; and in order to appear a more reasonable being, I keep constantly in her presence at home, and when inclined to walk abroad, I now always request her to join with me, and to break the solitude. Still, however, I feel the weakness of my own deception ; and though I sincerely love Christiana, yet in my heart poor Isabella, poor Augusta—I am leading myself into dangerous paths.

Previous to my leaving Vienna, I executed some writings which entitle Isabella to an independence, and put them into the hands of my steward, desiring him to wait on her, and

present them. On the back of the principal paper I have written with a pencil, "To Isabella, and to Altenburg's beloved Augusta."

I have not yet heard the event of the embassy of Grotz, but most fervently hope it has been successful. If Isabella should be still obstinate, in spite of the love and tenderness of Christiana, I shall anticipate a long winter of sorrow.—Oh indiscretion! though we feel no compunctions at the time of yielding to thee, what a black train of plagues, all the progeny of thy secret womb, and by ourselves begotten, do we afterwards open our disgusted eyes upon!

Altenburg.

Joseph Grotz to the Baron.

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordship may probably have wondered at my silence in respect to the affairs that you commanded me to execute ; but circumstances have so happened, that till this time it was not possible for me to give you any intelligence. What I have now to communicate is by no means of a pleasant nature. I however assure your Lordship, I have not wanted exertion in the business, though I have unfortunately failed in the completion of it.

The lady, whom you desired me to wait upon with the writings, has removed from her late place of residence, and with so much privacy, that it was with difficulty I lately traced her to an obscure lodging in the suburbs of the city. Having discovered her abode, and being desirous of relieving the anxiety of your Lordship as early as possible, I immediately went to the house, and begged permission to speak with her ; which request, after some little delay, she consented to, and I was brought before her.

Oh my Lord ! what a dreadful alteration in Madam, and in Miss Augusta, your Lordship's daughter !

At

At sixty-five we are enfeebled, both in body and in mind ; it is not strange, therefore, that my breath grew short, and that I burst into tears to see the eyes of the lady, once so brilliant, now sinking into their sockets ; and the sweet cheeks of her child without a tint of those roses which once overspread them—all faded ! pale and drooping, like a storm-beaten lily !

She sucked at the breast of my wife, my Lord ; she was fostered in her infancy by the milk of poor Susan : she has since, till within a few months, cursed months ! flourished, and gambolled, and sported before my eyes !

Pardon, therefore, the pratings and forrows of your old servant Grotz.

My Lord, Augusta's mother has seen the writings, heard a full explanation of their import, and read the short note addressed to her. Her answer was this :—

“The Baron knows my sentiments—they are fixed, established; he therefore must not, shall not trouble me any more. Henceforth I will owe nothing to him : were I friendless and famishing, passing by his door, or bending with burning thirst over his canal, I would yield to death rather than
take

take a morsel of bread from the one, or a drop of water from the other."

"So would I, so would I!" cried the daughter, clasping her mother's neck.

"You hear," said my poor Lady; "tell your master this, and God bless you, old man!"

The same words were repeated by your Lordship's daughter, who pressed my hand, and then went out of the apartment, leaning on the arm of her mother. I did not immediately leave the room—I could not—my nerves relaxed; but when they strengthened a little, I collected the papers, and departed from the house, which is but a sorry place for one who has long been

been accustomed to the elegancies of your Lordship's mansion. But to the heart of grief what is the difference between a palace and a dungeon? The letters which were sent to your Lordship some few days ago, did not pass through my hands, or they would have reached you earlier; but I hope they were of no great importance. Command in what manner the rejected writings are to be disposed of by your Lordship's old and faithful servant,

Joseph Grotz.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

STENDAL, there is no happiness for me ! I have, I fear, precipitated myself into misery, from which there can be no extrication. The slave of passion, and the fool of impulse has now nothing left to cover his extravagances but a sorry repentance. Good God, what a part have I acted !—I look with wonder on my past deeds, and am shocked even by my present presumption.

Count, read the enclosed letter ; it is written by Augusta, by my beloved child,

child, by the daughter of the abandoned Isabella ! Oh you know not how I have loved this girl ! you know not how her innocence, her simple accusations, and her sweet sensibilities have torn my heart !

I have scarcely possessed my senses since I received this letter ; it has brought my depravities fresh into my mind, and cast an ugly soil upon my nature. You are a father, Stendal—Oh how I envy you !—Had I, like you, been virtuous, like you I had been happy. I likewise am a father : I have children—yes, *children* ;—but I gave them being merely to make them objects of derision, of shame, and

and of poverty ! I have been base beyond your imagination ; and the curses of my progeny are likely to pass over my grave. I am a seducer and betrayer : in the exploits of the one I thought myself admired ; in the baseness of the other I find I am despicable.

Hear what my poor little girl says ; how affecting, how pathetic !—Read, read, and think what my tortures must be. Be careful of the letter, and return it to me ; I will carry it always near my heart : it shall be an eternal punishment to me for my sins ; and I will read it every night, in order that, as a penance, it may keep me anxious
and

and waking. What a shocking picture has she drawn of her unhappy mother ! Oh I see in it the delineations of insanity ! That beauty which I once admired, to be distorted ! that mind which was so sweet and strong, to be overthrown !

Mark how my child pleads for my return ; how unwilling she is to believe that I *can* desert her. She saw Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday pass over ; and on Thursday—torture must have wrung the innocent's heart. Perhaps she then, indeed, joined with Isabella in cursing her father !

Do

Do not you feel the force of the preparations that she was making to celebrate my return—of the drawing that she intended to place before me? The horrors of winter, the distresses of poverty, the relief of humanity—Isabella and herself the miserable women, I the administerer of comfort—I!—She has, I dare say, removed me already from the scene, and substituted a robber, a murderer, or a beast of prey!

I have not yet heard from Grotz, in respect to the writings which I executed in favour of Isabella. His silence alarms me; I cannot conjecture what is the occasion of it: but the fidelity
and

and integrity of the old man have been long known to me. After I had dissipated my fortune, I was obliged to discharge the honest fellow ; but on coming into the possession of that of Christiana, it was with pleasure I reinstated him.

Ah, my dear Count! you cannot conceive the difficulty of the part I am now acting : like a compounded character in a drama, I cover my baseness with hypocrisy, and hide habitual vices beneath an indiscriminate heap of artificial virtues. I have hitherto deceived my amiable wife ; and pray Heaven the deception may continue till I shall become more worthy !

* * * * *

Letters from Vienna are arrived—there is one from Grotz : I have read it, and my afflictions are increased ; for it informs me that Isabella hides herself in an obscure lodging, and that both she and her daughter are resolved to bend to the rigours of want, rather than receive from me the most trifling assistance. Obstinate women, perish then !—Oh no, no ! Isabella, Augusta, why will you not still let me be a friend and a father to you ?

Christiana calls me to walk with her. Count, were you to see this woman, you would admire her. Think
me

me not licentious for wishing a plurality of wives ; but in the division of my love between Isabella and Christiana, the sun would not bid good-day to a happier mortal. Aye, I know I talk madly ; and confess there is at this time a great fault in my brain.

My wife calls again :—I come, deluded woman ! Adieu, dear Count. My intellects want a new arrangement, and there is an oppressive sickness in the heart of

Altenburg.

Baron Altenburg to Augusta.

AUGUSTA, my beloved child !
you must not deny me the comfort of
writing to you ; you must not pre-
vent me from telling you that I am
still your affectionate parent. I have
not had a moment's tranquillity since
the arrival of your letter, which, on
the first perusal, filled me with inde-
scribable anguish : to reply to you
now increases that anguish ; and I
think I see my dear daughter regard-
ing me with contempt and horror.

Be

Be patient, Augusta, and hear me.

I am married : I can no more return to your mother—duty to my wife forbids it ; we are therefore parted for ever ! The connection that once subsisted between us is dissolved, and we must not expose ourselves to the danger of any future meeting. Still be tranquil, child :—your mother is wild, and will not listen to me ; but to you I think I can shew some extenuation for my conduct.

Had I not acted in the manner that I have done, the sad remainder of my life, Augusta, must have passed in a common prison ; and my last breathings

breathings must have been within the damp walls of a dungeon. Could you, could you, dear daughter, have seen the days of age creep on your poor father in a place like that? Carry your eye to it, and to the soul-weary captive;—see his wants, his misery, his despair! Relieve him—revive the sickly flame of life—lead him again to the free enjoyment of the pure air; you cannot, you have no means. His fate and your own are combined; his sufferings, his poverty, his dreadful wants, all attach themselves to you. Alas, alas! Altenburg, Isabella, and Augusta are expiring; they grow more weak—weaker still—they perish! they perish!

Such must have been our general fate ; and what I have lately done could alone save us from it. I have not painted an unnatural scene, but such an one, dear Augusta, as misfortune would have presented to us. To avert the impending evil, to rescue myself from imprisonment, and to give comfort to those whose happiness was of no less consideration to me than my own, I was compelled to change my system, the result of which is now known to you and to your mother ; and though she refuses to listen to my reasonings, I trust that your more tranquil mind will feel for my condition, acknowledge the necessity of my actions,

actions, and pity me for being so cruelly driven to them.

Endeavour to sooth the passions of your mother ;—plead for me ; tell her my sufferings have been, and still are dreadfully acute ; that my memory will never discard her, and that my heart can never wholly throw her from it. Pursue the subject farther ; talk to her till she agrees to accept the writings which old Grotz lately offered to her ; and, if possible, get her to consent that you should quit her for a short time, in order that you may come under the protection of your father and the Baroness, who is anxious to take you to her heart. This desire

must make her appear amiable in your eyes ; and her connections are such as will probably ensure you the most considerable advantages.

Your mother has refused to comply with this proposal ; but as your elevation and happiness may perhaps depend on it, I would have you employ your most forcible arguments to put aside the hasty determination of Isabella, from whom I would not separate you entirely : for she might, at certain periods, see and converse with you, though to me she must be ever hereafter invisible. To meet were again to love ; and to love were assuredly to be wretched.

Let

Let the necessity of these conditions do away the hardness of them. Soften the obdurate heart of your mother ; accept the writings yourself if she should again refuse so to do, and they shall be accordingly altered : and, dear daughter, pray, pray take the diamonds which Isabella lately returned to me ! In spite of your peremptory commands, I have desired Grotz to obtain a private interview, and to present you the trinkets in the absence of your mother. Discover not my intention to her ; admit the old man, receive from him the jewels, and look on them as coming from him to whose heart you ever have
F 3 been,

been, still are, and while he breathes, will be most dear, most precious.

Attend to all that I have said; obey me as far as you can, and let your affections be proportionate to mine. The Baroness will love you; she has seen your picture, and is filled with a lively admiration. Come to us, though you return again soon. Admit old Grotz, and refuse not the jewels. God bless you, child! God bless your mother!

Altenburg.

The

*The Baronefs of Altenburg to Mifs
Meffein.*

I HAVE been long filent, but forgive me, my dear Charlotte; there have been times, you well remember, when you have fallen into the indolence of correfpondence, and when I have filenced all your excuses with a ready and voluntary pardon, which ought now to fmooth your brow, if it be ruffled, and cleanfe your heart of every particle of anger.

I told you in my laft letter that I and my Altenburg were preparing to

F 4

leave

leave Vienna, in order to take a view of our estate at F——; we accordingly quitted the former, and have since been residing some little time at the latter place, the natural beauties of which are heightened by a most luxurious and fruitful summer.

Bountiful Father of the heavens and earth! thou who sheddest thy fostering dews, who causest the blossom to open, the fruit to ripen into perfection, and the corn to wave on the plains, on the hills, and in the valleys, which thy mysterious hand formed from the shapeless mass of chaos—Power of my adoration! were I to forget to bless thee in the morning, I were unworthy
to

to live throughout the day ; or were I to neglect my orisons at night, I should be undeserving of the protection of thy soothing spirits, who give to us in our temporary oblivion, the dreams of pleasure, and the visions of delight. Having made me what I am, with such liberal endowments, never may the seeds of penury root in my heart ! never may I, with criminal thoughtlessness, withhold my superfluities from those who have missed thine envied bounties !

Charlotte, I really think I may, without vanity, say that I possess no inconsiderable strength of mind ; for I learn that my name has been abroad

of late, that the prudes have condemned me for marrying a libertine, and that much evil is augured from my temerity. And yet I have listened to these tales of idleness, these accusations of folly, and forebodings of ignorance, without either pain or anger. To smile at impertinence is the most effectual method of crushing it; gravity merely provokes it, and anger only serves to give elasticity to its springs.

Either the world, or your friend, is miserably deceived in respect to the character of Altenburg; I think he has been rudely calumniated, and many of the vices which the self-
finning

finning moralists of the times have been pleased to annex to him, my heart has willingly softened into improprieties, which may yet be effectually purged away. I knew him not in the days of error, nor did I see much of him before I became his wife ; but I did not unite myself to him without love : he planted that passion first in my heart, and his sincerity and frankness rooted it most firmly. He gained me not by hypocrisy and canting, nor wished to pass himself as immaculate : he shewed his very soul to me ; I deemed it a noble prize, and never may I repent the claiming of it !

Altenburg is several years older than myself, though the difference is not very conspicuous, and the beauty of his person cannot easily be excelled; he has also a very superior mind, and since our connection I am sure it has been strictly governed by reason. There are moments in which his tenderness almost overpowers me; and his language is of such a peculiar nature, that I could almost persuade myself Sensibility was his mother.

While I retain the love of Altenburg—and may that and life fly from me together!—let the loquacious few, who arrogantly call themselves the world, arraign me as they please, and
exercise

exercise their spleen even till it becomes vapid to themselves.

In my former letter, Charlotte, I made you acquainted with the connection that for many years subsisted between the Baron and an Italian woman of the name of Marilli, by whom he has a daughter of the age of fifteen or sixteen; and, judging by a miniature which he has shewn me, she must be a truly lovely girl. The mother has accepted a provision from the Baron, and is retiring to her native country. Being willing to take the daughter to my own protection, I hinted my desire to Altenburg, who instantly applied to the Signora for
that

that purpose ; but could not induce her to part from the girl, of whom he is exceedingly fond.

This refusal has, I know, given him extreme pain, though he endeavours to conceal it ; but as they will soon leave the country, it must be my task to bring him again to tranquillity, and my hopes of success are strong ones.

I wish the application of Altenburg had been attended to : his Augusta would have made me a sweet companion ; and I fear the sentiments of her mother may be dangerous to inexperienced innocence. I believe the model of your heart, my dear Charlotte, is so
much

much like mine, that I do not fear it will condemn the actions of your friend towards the former associates of Altenburg, the elder of whom I pity, and the younger, though unknown to me, I really love.

The fastidious sentiments of many of my acquaintances actually make me smile, and some few of them have completely disgusted me. You remember the old Baronefs of L——; having no longer charms for admiration, youth for gaiety, or health for amusement, she has assumed the garb of a devotee, and become a professed censurer of the prevailing habits and customs; and though, in days that are

3 passed,

passed, reputation vowed no longer to be her handmaid, her intimacy with the Margrave of B—— having assumed an unquestionable appearance, yet now she would place her foot on the neck of Virtue, and cast the shadow of prejudice on the face of Innocence.

She has been talking to me concerning my late connection, with matchless confidence; I resented it with an unaccustomed spirit; and now, perhaps, the gossip is going her rounds in Vienna, with my name and a bag of venom hanging on her tongue.

Our

Our German ladies have certainly many infirmities and bad propensities. I wish my dear Charlotte would, to make their national pride and characteristic impertinence of still less importance than they are, come to her friend

Christiana.

Augusta to Baron Altenburg.

HOPE had lulled me into a pleasant dream; the moments fled; I awoke not: the illusion was still fair, beautiful, and the creator of it watched over me with delight. You have now roused me; the vision no longer
glows,

glows, and the forms which were moving gaily in it, have yielded to the intrusion of demons. Peace has wrapped her white robes around her, and fled ; and Misery, in her tattered rags, and sighing in the sickness of her soul, approached near to me, saying, " Girl, thou art young, and not long ago thy prospects were sunny, though they now are dismal. Let me take thee in my arms ; live with thee forever ; travel through life with thee, and be near to thee on thy death-bed. Come, here are garments for thee ; such weeds as these distinguish my followers from the offspring of happiness : come, quit thy pleasant home ; bring thy mother with thee, and let

us

us all seek the dark ways and flinty passages !”

Oh unbelieving fool that I have been! The present sickness of my heart might have been less, had I shaken off credulity, and not so firmly relied on the virtue of man's nature. Scourges and unceasing reproofs await the disobedience of children ; but the inexperienced triflers must neither murmur, nor turn a devious eye upon the oppressions and cruelties of their parents. Oh father ! so well did I love you once, and so much were you in my mind, that there have been times when, praying to my God, my thoughts (Heaven pardon me for it!) have

have wandered from my devotions, and fixed wholly upon you.

To make you great, I lessened every other object. Where was there so noble a mind—where so good, so generous a heart? When you have been heaping kindness on me, what ecstasy it was to break from you, and to exclaim, “He is my father—he gave me life! I owe my being to this beloved, this excellent man!”—It was in these moments pleasure to weep; many a time joy has swelled my tears. Past, past, Augusta, are thy sensations of delight!

My

My Lord, I did not acquaint my mother of the letter you sent to me : I admitted Grotz privately ; I suffered him to place before me the jewels which once ornamented me and the parent with whom I used to be happy. But I delivered them again to the old man, retaining only a string of pearls, as a remembrance of a cruel father, whose desertion could not make me hate him. Take them back again, my Lord—they would only mock my wretchedness ; and if placed upon my bosom, like those which lie midway in the mine, would sparkle over a gloomy and comfortless abyss. Take them, my Lord—they are in the possession of Grotz.

I told

I told you that I kept a string of pearls as a remembrance ; but finding it a pain to look on them, I have disposed of the baubles. One day, when my mother was not present, I put them for a little while round my neck ; but a chain of iron had afflicted me less. I tore them from me, opened the window, and threw them one by one into the street.

A little beggar girl was standing below ; she picked them up as I dropped them, and when she had got possession of them all, she sat down on the threshold, smilingly untied a string of beads, and having carefully inter-
mixed

mixed her toys and the pearls, went her ways on her supplicatory errand.

Oh that I had been the insensible little wretch ! Perhaps her father gave her the poor ornament that she wore ; and perhaps, after a day of severity and hard living, when she enters her sorry abode, *that father* may take her in his arms, and say to her, “ God bless thee, poor child ! ” Oh that I were her, rather than what I am ! And yet our worldly situations will soon be similar.

My Lord, I never, never will leave my mother ;—happy together, or miserable together. I applaud the independence of her spirit, and will frame

mine

mine according to it. While I have a nerve in my arm, I will exercise it for her support :—it is true I have not been used to work for my bread ; but custom, that will soon teach the Baron of Altenburg to forget the creatures who have perhaps too long checked his pleasures, and impeded his happiness, may also teach me to think without regret on the sorry alteration that has already happened, and on the poverty that is likely soon to wrap itself around me and my dear mother. We go from hence to-morrow. Farewel, farewell ! and cruel as you have been, God guard you, father !

Augusta.

The Baroneſs of Altenburg to Miſs Meſſein.

CHARLOTTE, my dear Altenburg is ill—very, nay I fear dangerously ill ! The firſt appearance of his indiſpoſition alarmed, and an increaſing fever has terrified me ; it was preceded by a depression of ſpirits that he was not able to conceal, though he evidently ſtrove to do ſo, and by an abſence of the mind that plainly ſhewed its internal diſturbance. Oh what can be the occaſion of it ?

Seeing my agitation, he entreated me not to alarm myself unnecessarily ; but I could not be in any degree tranquil till he consented to the attendance of a physician, which he was previously much inclined to dispense with. The Doctor does not speak very unfavourably of his patient to me, but to others I have reason to suppose he is less cautious : I know he entertains some serious apprehensions, and regards the progress of the fever with great concern. Oh Heaven ! if I should lose my Altenburg ! Charlotte, there are a thousand agonies in that thought !

He

He even strives to laugh away my tears ; but in that expedient I can discover the opposition of Nature, against whom he is weakly struggling. Whenever I take his hot hand, he tells me he shall soon be well, and that to his affliction a child would scarcely yield. My continuing in his chamber, I perceive does not please him ; his motives, however, for wishing my absence spring from love and fear, which serve to fix me near his bed, rather than drive me from it.

He had not slept for a considerable time till last night, when, about nine o'clock, he fell into a slumber, and I laid myself by his side. He continued

to sleep for some time, 'alternately quiet and disturbed ; for his breathings were frequently hard, his hands hot, and his forehead dewy.

The hour of midnight went over, and the second of morning was come, when he started up, and looking around him, and then at me, enquired the time ; on my replying to him, he gently chid me, and desired me to retire to bed. I was obeying him, when he called me back, and pressing his burning lips on my hand, " God bless you, Christiana !" he cried ; " and may his angels watch over you, as you, their sister, have watched over me !"

" Heaven

“Heaven protect you, my Altenburg !” I exclaimed, as I went out of the room in tears, which I wished him not to notice. I was in his chamber again early in the day, but found nought of comfort there, no happy alteration being discernible. On many occasions I have hitherto thought that I possessed much fortitude and confidence ; but to see my kind, my dearly loved Altenburg on the bed of affliction—God ! perhaps on his death-bed—Oh how shocking is that idea ! I have now no strength, no courage !

Charlotte, grant me the request that I am going to make :—come to me as early as possible ; with all the

force of friendship I entreat you. On this spot I have no friends ; and if any fatality be awaiting my dear Altenburg, not one consoling voice would reach me while I gazed on him in his coffin, or dragged my weak limbs after him to the grave.

The Doctor is now coming from his patient, and I go to him trembling, and tortured by fears. Come, come, dear girl, as early as possible ; and under this roof put up your prayers to Heaven for the life of the husband of

Christiana.

The

The same to the same.

YOUR letter, my friend, has reached me, and given pain to my heart. How concerned I am that, while I was pressing you to come to me during the affliction of my husband, you should be closing the eyes of a mild and venerable parent, and weeping over the corse of her who gave you to the world, fostered you at her breast, and watched you with tenderness through youth to your late state of happiness!

Soon, soon may that happiness return ! Let the tears of affection and regret take their course, and then recal your former serenity to your bosom. The thoughts which attach themselves to death may be gloomy ; but those which range to immortality, are bright as the clouds of summer.

Good God, what transition ! To breathe oppressively, to strive to raise the heavy eyelid, to touch the warm hand that gives no heat, and cannot be pressed, to fall from the supporting arm cold, stiff, totally insensate ;—then the spirit—wonderful essence ! to burst from its secret prison-door, to ascend, to travel through the ways of light on
the

the wings of rapidity ; and, unobstructed, to call at the gate of heaven, saying, “ Open, Almighty Father ! admit thy expected servant : open, Almighty Father, and let me dwell with thee for ever ! ”

Oh Charlotte ! I am thrilled with an inward rapture ; my feelings at this moment are very strange. If imagination has its victims, and I sometimes believe it, I fear I shall fall a sacrifice. Dry up your tears, my friend ; remember Nature enforced not her demand till a long date, and even then did it with an unusual degree of mild resolution :—dispel, therefore, the clouds of sorrow ; turn your eyes from

the body of your mother, and direct them towards her remaining family of love.

My Altenburg--Charlotte, he will live, he will live ! My fears made me wild, but they were groundless ; the fever that preyed upon the poor sufferer is gone over ; his mind is become tranquil, and nothing remains but a languor which will I hope soon disappear. Gratitude has ever been in my nature : but Oh the gratitude that I am anxious to offer to the Supreme Being on this occasion, flows incessantly, still without any pomp of words or studied form.

I seem

I seem to be newly created ; I go about the house, smiling ; I meet the Chaplain.—“ Friend,” I exclaim, “ my husband is recovered. Remember to whom your praises are due—to God ! worship him for it.” I make my servants assemble together, tell them of the happy change, and bid them rejoice ;—then I fly to the chamber of my Altenburg ; my lips fix on his still pale cheek ; I throw my arms around his neck, and place my very heart before him, in order that he may see the characters of love upon it.

Enthusiast !—Well, be it so, while my enthusiasm is not injurious. Fare-

wel, my dear friend ! Peace be to the
bosom of yourself, and to the kindred
mourners who surround you !

Christiana.

Count Stendal to Baron Altenburg.

WHY this long silence, Altenburg ?
What is the cause of it ? Have I, in
my plainness of speech, advanced
any thing to give you displeasure ? If
so, trust me I am sorry for it. There
are some qualities in me which will,
in their obstinacy, discover themselves.
I have never been accustomed to
strangle my thoughts ; and have so
long

long indulged myself in the free utterance of every thing allied to truth, that in this age of fashion and ceremony, when polite lying is thought an accomplishment, and harsh facts are held to be odious, I believe there are those who, seeing me approach them, would be ready to exclaim, "This barbarian must be avoided till he has gone through the rules of civilization."

Remember, Altenburg, I am a plain, rusticated mortal; one who is little pleased with ceremony, or proud of riches; one whom state and pageantry disgust; no cringer at Courts, no smiler at levees; nothing more than

an

an unaspiring being, who, for his happiness, must discourse with Nature, and suffer her to regulate his days in those retirements, where winter makes him contemplative, and summer joyful; where love comes willingly to bless him; and where he, who is fond of prattling on little concerns, finds too much poverty of circumstance to feed on.

The world has said (it may still say) Stendal is not old; he has rank, fortune, is married to a lovely woman, and his means are nearly princely; yet, for all this, he is cynical and mean; he retires from the sphere in which he should move, merely to accumulate
4 wealth;

wealth; affects simplicity to cover his parsimony; keeps his wife in obscurity through similar motives; and has too poor a soul to support that dignity which attaches itself to his name.

Oh ye sorry observers! my happiness is well secured against your malice, too remote for your sarcasms to reach; it is in the beauty and fertility of my demesne, in the prosperity of its cultivators, in the smiles and fidelity of my dependants, in the caresses of my sweet wife and blessed progeny!—such is the constitution of my happiness; and in my retreats, heard are the effusions of genius, and the deeper tones

tones of wisdom, arising from enchanting poetry and divine philosophy.

Altenburg, break your stubborn silence, and write to me. I need not repeat that you are in my heart, and that I wish the felicities of life upon you. I am going a little tour of friendship, and shall on Thursday be at N——, where I would have you direct to me. Adieu! the best wishes of a friend attend on you and the Baroness.

Stendal.

The

The Baron in Reply.

THE cause of my silence, friend, is not that which you conjectured: though your truths have carried conviction, and your accusations reached my conscience, which went the greater way to meet them, yet none of them should have sealed my lips, lest it should have been suspected that my taciturnity arose either from insensibility, or the spirit of obstinacy.

I was preparing to write to you at the very moment your letter arrived; and have now to inform you that I
have

have of late been deprived of the pleasure of corresponding with you by a severe affliction. Yes, affliction, my friend ; indisposition is too forceless a word to express my late situation ; it may, indeed be applicable to the state of my body, but is not important enough for the malady of my mind. The former is again assuming its functions, and the latter I am striving to amend : there must be resolution on my part—I find it necessary ; and if my exertions be not great, my relapse may be fatal.

The cause of all this internal pain and intellectual warfare is, as you may conjecture, in Isabella ; my misery
arises

arises from her and from her daughter; and they have so opposed my projects, that my reason almost sunk with them. You know my natural rashness and impetuosity: there have been moments when I almost cursed these women, but the imprecations were immediately succeeded by blessings; and I have shuddered at my own impiety, and called back again the discarded objects to my heart.

Isabella and Augusta are the voluntary victims of poverty; the fortune of the one, it is resolved by them, shall be the fortune of the other; every valuable has been rejected; and by a letter which I lately received from old Grotz,

Grotz, I find that even the greater part of their clothes have been packed up by them, and sent to my house; and also that they have again removed their lodging, and with so much privacy, that nothing can be learned of them.

They will starve! they will perish! Isabella and my girl will die in want and wretchedness, even while luxuries spread the board of the man who has deserted them, and who once was, and perhaps, in spite of their protestations, still is, remembered and beloved. Presumptuous, unnatural thought!—Dearly as I have ever prized my daughter, her actual worth was not known
to

to me till I lost her; for I knew not till of late that, possessing the similitude, she had the mind of an angel.

She has written to me a farewell letter; it is a composition that would melt the most iron-hearted mortal, and a savage parent might weep over it. Oh Stendal! that very letter laid me on a bed of sickness; I read it till I was almost distracted; my heart sickened, and nature was nearly subdued. A fever succeeded; but, thank Heaven, it did not reach my mind; I have therefore retained my senses, and consequently been very guarded in my expressions.

What a good angel is Christiana !
Divided as my heart is, she must ever
be a dear object to it ; and if my love
wants that fervour which it possessed
when directed towards Isabella, still my
attachment to my wife is tender, and
firmly fixed. She has been my nurse,
her sweet bosom my pillow, her eyes
the anxious watchers of my restlessness ;
from morning till night she has
attended me, and again from night till
morning. When I lay faint and exhausted,
I saw the terror of her face,
and heard the murmurs of her breast ;
but now I have, in some degree, regained
my strength, and since danger has left me,
mirth presides over her countenance ;
she laughs, she sings,
and

and shews such proofs of love, as, even in my present debilitated state, awaken my admiration. Dear enthusiast ! never will I forget my duty to thee :— duty ! the word is insignificant, and does not reach my meaning.

I have kept her in ignorance respecting Isabella ; she believes that my mistress and daughter are gone back to Italy, and that they have accepted from me a competent provision. Amiable being ! how few of the prejudices of the sex obscure her nature ! She can pardon those frailties over which at first she sighs ; and her compassion and humanity are directed towards those places from which some
women

women would fastidiously turn, or look upon with affected disgust.

I dare not, at this time, trust myself in saying any more respecting these unfortunate creatures: happy, happy should I be, could I put the same restraint upon my mind as on my pen; but every effort that I have hitherto made to direct the former, has been totally ineffectual. The brain is an obstinate republic, and it is difficult to account for the anarchy that breeds in it.

Dear Stendal, I feel a languor creeping over me. I promised my wife not to be absent more than half an hour, and therefore must fold my letter,
and

and dispatch it. But first let me wish you pleasure in your tour of friendship. As you did not mention the name of those whom you were going to visit, I presume they are unknown to me. There is a circumstance of which I wish to speak, relating to the village in which this letter will find you; it is——But I am faint, and cannot now proceed. Within a few days, perhaps to-morrow, I may address you on a subject which I am, at this time, too weak and irresolute to mention.

Altenburg.

The Baron to the Count.

YOU are a man of virtue ; in the paths of rectitude you have been steady, never deviating therefrom : your pursuit has been happiness, and you have attained it. I—but no parallels, lest they should appear tinged with sycophancy. I am a poor extenuator of my errors, and can plead infinitely better for those of other people than for my own. I am convinced of the fallacy of the doctrine, that a man's optics make not the imperfections of himself visible : he may, I admit, for a while close his eyes upon

upon them ; but the time cannot be long before he must open them to a full disclosure of his deformities, whether he confesses it, or not.

The sequel to these reflections may probably make me appear to you like a sorry author, who having something base to obtrude upon the reader, would fain attract him by some artifice in a laboured preface.

The letter that I wrote to you two days ago, must have led you to expect another. The subject, however, which I am desirous of entering upon, embarrasses me ; and, fearful of your further censures, I have been much

inclined to do away what I said, by silence. But to retract would not be honourable ; and to proceed will be, I fear, to lead myself into merited disgrace. Were I of the Catholic persuasion, I should weary even the most patient confessor, whose absolutions on my multiplied transgressions would necessarily come with tardiness and reluctance.

About twenty years ago, and when I was not quite eighteen years old, I and a juvenile acquaintance, whose habits and idle propensities were kindred with my own, retired from Vienna, and for the course of three months resided in the village where
you

you now are. We had a large supply of money, which enabled us to keep a more than ordinary appearance; and we lived in the extravagance which had become habitual to us. To prevent the impertinent enquiries of our friends, we assumed fictitious names; and as the spot was particularly favourable to hunting, and the season being that of sports, it formed our principal amusement.

My dissipated associate had accommodated himself with a temporary mistress, whom he brought from Vienna: and as I had neglected to do so, and possessed no more virtue than my young acquaintance, immediately

on our arrival at the village, I began to look for an object of similar gratification.

Vice, I soon discovered, was little known in the hamlet, and wantonness not to be found in it; still I saw women, young, blooming, and modest; and that to seduce any of them, was to be a villain, neither perplexed nor entered into my mind. Being an epicure in my sensuality, my heart bounded when I discovered a girl of about seventeen years of age, and of singular beauty, residing in a cottage at a little distance from the house which I had engaged: I marked her as my prize; my imagination rioted, and I was impatient

impatient to obtain possession of the lovely rustic.

In the present days, as it was in those to which I am now alluding, to seduce the affections of a wife, or to pillage her of her honour, is looked upon and pardoned frequently with a smile ; and to decoy a mistress from a friend, is applauded as an act of heroism and ingenuity. I was acquainted with the tenor of my companion's sentiments, and knew the strength of his passions ; therefore, to effect my security, and forward my own vile plans, I kept him ignorant of my designs, and did not point out the charming cottager to his notice.

One day, taking advantage of his absence, I fauntered past the lowly habitation of the stranger, and saw her knitting at the door : her beauty heightened as I approached near to her, for as soon as her eyes came upon me, blushes rose in her cheeks, and she looked down on the ground, rather than on her work. This evident confusion only served to embolden me ; and to subdue a timid woman was, I thought, more easy than to prevail with a confident one.

Her countenance was truly sweet ; she had not the appearance of a ruddy rustic ; there was a grace about her so natural and fascinating, that I looked
on

on her with increasing delight. Opening the wicket of the garden, I walked up to her, and with some degree of respect, asked her whether she had seen a lady and gentleman go past the cottage within the last half hour; she answering in the negative, I advanced some further questions, and attempted to begin a conversation, when I found that, with her beauty, she had no mean intellect, and that the sweetest simplicity accompanied every word she uttered.

We were soon, however, interrupted by her mother, who came into the garden; and as the old lady seemed to scrutinize me, I thought it proper

to retire from the cottage till opportunity better favoured my project.

Stendal, the recollection of the means which I used in order to bring innocence and unwary youth into ruin, at this moment chills my languid blood, and gives sickness to my heart. Moralist, what must you think of your unworthy but repentant friend ?

I contrived to see and to talk with her again on the following day : several other meetings succeeded. I forced her to accept some little presents, professed an attachment for her, and by a masterpiece of dissimulation, and after an acquaintance of two months,
she

she gave her virtue up to me. Barbarian like, I seduced her with lies; swore that I was the son of a merchant, that I sincerely loved, and would marry her, and that I would never, never forsake her. She yielded to me; our intercourse was continued with privacy, and she had no suspicion of the deception that I had practised.

But she had scarcely entered into the errors of love, before she heard the upbraidings of conscience, and felt the pangs of guilt. I had much difficulty in soothing her; and whenever I found her inclined to melancholy, I cheered her by talking of the union that

would soon subside between us, which generally dispersed the clouds of anxiety.

I found that the village priest was the friend of my lovely victim ; that she had been his favourite from her infancy ; that he had given her an education, and in some degree improved her mind, and carried his attachment so far, as to persuade her parents, one of whom was since dead, to name her after his wife, who had been recently wrested from him. Neither of these circumstances, however, impeded me in the progress of villany : my religious tenets were very weak ; and if ever I felt any respect
fo

for the sacerdotal character, an intrusion of some of the glare of false philosophy, which had led away my understanding, would almost instantly overthrow and destroy it.

I had not hinted at my amour to my friend, who now began to talk of returning to Vienna, as the means of prodigality were failing him. He urged me to accompany him; I assented to his request, and an early day was fixed for our departure.

I now felt the pangs of self-reproach; the cottage of poor Josephine I could not look indifferently on; and when in a moonlight evening, and in the

absence of her mother, she stole to a little thicket, the usual place of our assignations, and crept to my bosom, Oh then I began to suspect I was a villain! Still it was but a suspicion, and it abided not long with me.

Count, I will abridge my tale.

I left the ruined girl without taking any leave of her. Returning to Vienna, I strove, like a monster, to forget her; but it was impossible to expel her immediately from my memory, because Vienna offered not so lovely a woman to my notice. The varied dissipations of six successive months could not wholly drive her from

from my mind ; that time had elapsed when I wrote a letter to her, in which I enclosed a bill of some value : and, still using the fictitious name of Rostock, assured her that I should ever love her ; but on the subject of marriage I was very much guarded, if not wholly silent.

After waiting with great impatience for the course of a month, I received an answer to my letter, not written by Josephine, but by the Priest, of whom I have before spoken ; and being in a serious mood when it reached me, the edges of a thousand swords could scarcely have mangled me more than the good man's words
and

and intelligence. He first expatiated on the crime of seduction, and on the prevalence of vice; then painted the poor cottager in all the colours of innocence—colours which I had sullied, innocence which I had defiled! He spoke of her confession, her consequent shame and agony; and shewed her to my imagination broken-hearted, and sobbing on the bosom of her unhappy mother, in an advanced state of pregnancy, and of ruined health and mind.

Had he presented her to me at that moment, I could have exclaimed, “This woman has been injured by me; but as my wife, and with the sincerity

sincerity of love, she shall have reparation."—Oh Stendal ! I cannot now proceed ; the next post shall bring you what I am at this time unable to send. You may never have felt the pangs of conscience ; I have—I do ; at this moment they rack the breast, and almost distract the brain of

Altenburg.

The Baron to the Count.

IF I did not weary you, dear Stendal, with the beginning of my tale, I entreat that you will listen to the remainder of it. The picture of the

the

the good old Priest disturbed my imagination, and I thought myself cursed in being the cause of all the misery that he had so pathetically described. Conscience is never so susceptible of any wound as of the first, because there is no previous suspicion of its being merited; every other attack on it is less severe; frailty grows more palpable, and the repetition of faults seems more deserving of punishment: precautions, therefore, are taken against those inflictions, to which at length it becomes habituated, and which sink the acute sense into comparative indifference and apathy.

Preparations

Preparations were then making for my going to Italy. My father was busy in arranging my concerns, in reproving me for my former levities, and in entreating me to be more guarded and prudent in my future conduct. He was unwilling that I should be much with my thoughtless associates, and seemed desirous that I should spend with him all the intervening time till the day fixed for my departure from Vienna. This restraint I found highly disagreeable, particularly as I had formed a project of seeing the poor unhappy cottager again, and of making her some reparation previously to my leaving Germany.

Six weeks after receiving the probing letter of the Priest, and also after having persuaded my father to grant me a few days' absence, I hastened down to the village where I had led the fond and unsuspecting Josephine from innocence to shame. It was my intention to direct that a sufficient sum of money should be annually paid for the support of herself, her child, if it lived, and her mother;—when I should come into the possession of the expected fortunes of my father and my uncle, I wished to do more for them; but till those events happened, I meant to conceal my real name and quality, and again to use that under which I had become her seducer.

I knew

I knew that I could not attend to all the promises I had made her, that of marriage being included: such an union was impossible; and greatly as I loved her, I believed her to be much too good, in spite of her frailty, to become my mistress; still I hoped to accommodate matters with some degree of satisfaction, though the idea of seeing her confused, and of encountering the eyes of her godfather, abashed me.

It was evening when I entered the village; the sun had gone down, and twilight was travelling over the forest, which lay on the one side, and falling on the hamlet that rose on the other.

Nothing

Nothing broke the silence but the salutations of the retiring peasants, the repeated "Good night" of the little children, who were playing in the road, and the sound of the bell swelling from the village church.

My horse was tired, and I was glad to find myself so near a resting-place. Calling to a boy, who was running along the path, I requested him to lead my horse to the inn, as I wished to dismount, and to walk either to the cottage of Josephine, or to the Rectory. The lad, however, told me that he could not oblige me, because he was hastening to see the funeral that was proceeding towards the church.

"Simpleton!"

“ Simpleton !” said I, “ here is money for you. Whose funeral is it ?”

“ Poor Josephine’s !” cried the young son of Nature; “ poor Josephine’s !” and he ran away from me with swiftnefs.

“ Josephine’s !” I exclaimed; “ not *my* Josephine, surely ! There may be many women of that name in the village; and yet—and yet grief may have broken the heart of my victim ! My cruelty may have blasted her in the spring of life !”

My heart was growing sick with conjecture; I dismounted from my horse,

horse, tied it to a tree, and followed the steps of the young informer.

In a few minutes I was in the church-yard : a solemn procession was moving near to me ; it still approached—it came close to me. I stared upon the slow-pacing and unobserving attendants. Before went the pastor, bending towards the earth, and sighing as he passed.—“ He must sigh for Josephine !” said my frightened soul. Then came the corpse : the wind blew the pall against my cheek ; my shiverings increased—*If it be Josephine !*—The first mourner followed ; it was an old woman, who staggered as she walked ; her hands were clasped, her eyes

eyes fixed on the coffin.—“ Oh my God ! Oh my child ! Oh daughter, daughter ! ”

I heard her, knew her voice ; it was Josephine's mother ! I was supported by a tombstone, which was not colder than my body. I sunk into a short insensibility ; and when I again unclosed my eyes, discovered no one near me. I rubbed my forehead, fearing a distemperature of my mind ; but seeing light from the windows of the church, found that there was no delusion.

I went towards the house of God (unfit place for me !), and entered it. I did not suppose that I should be

recognized, as I wore a great coat, the collar of which I had pulled above my head ; beside, it was the hour of general sorrow, not of curiosity ; and the eyes of the Priest and the mourners were fixed on the coffin, seldom straying towards any other object.

My vital powers became still more cold and languid ; and in the dark recesses of the edifice, the optics of imagination collected all the ugly forms of fear.—“ I have accelerated the death of an innocent young creature,” I inwardly murmured ; “ I have given birth to a child, and been the instrument of tearing the nipple of its mother’s breast from its little mouth !

mouth! I have planted sorrow in the bosoms of the sympathetic! I have stabbed the heart of old maternal fondness, and agonized the mind of one of God's most holy servants!"

I could not bear these quick reflections, could no longer look on the sorrowing group; but, hurrying out of the church, soon after remounted my horse, and rode precipitately from the village, regarding myself as a fiend more cruel and sanguinary than the Devil when he was flying from the corruption that he had implanted in the sweets of Eden.

Returning hastily to Vienna, fatigue and heat brought on a fever, and my mind was almost in a state of distraction. My father was alarmed, and entreated me to explain the cause of my malady and mental disorder; but I was not to be brought to confession, and remained with the secret in my tormented breast. My fever declined as rapidly as it had risen, and I was determined on leaving Vienna immediately; and though my father wished me to delay my journey for a short time, I would not be thwarted in my purpose.

Before I left Vienna, however, I wrote, under the name which I had formerly

formerly assumed, to the minister who had buried poor Josephine.—“ I have been guilty of a most serious crime,” I said; “ it presses on my heart, still more heavily on my conscience. I abhor myself—you must abhor me; and Heaven will, I fear, scowl on me for it. Man feels no compunction for little vices; he rarely becomes a penitent till his deeds have been monstrous. I entreat your forgiveness, good and holy man! Take care of the child of my poor Josephine; I will provide for her mother, and for her infant; and in the name of mercy, of charity, I entreat your pardon!”

I wrote in the fulness of my heart, with an agitated hand, and with watery eyes. The answer of the virtuous pastor I need not repeat : he promised to be the agent in the business, and to apply my remittances ; but assured me that, if the widow were not afflicted, and his pecuniary means were not much confined, neither the old woman nor the child should subsist on the bounty of Josephine's betrayer.

My journey to Venice could not disburthen my mind of its melancholy ; all the sensibilities which Nature had implanted in me, were in activity ; and reason, for the first time, appeared to be

be breaking through the clustering levities of youth and intemperance. I shewed my mind to my tutor, and told him the secret that had long oppressed me.

“ You think too seriously of this affair,” he replied ; “ while we lament the effects of our actions, if we turn our eyes towards Nature, in her shall we discover the compulsive source of them. Those principles, or instincts, which are known by the appellations of virtue and vice, are consequences resulting from the different springs of our passions : and I hold it to be equally reasonable that a watch should stop after repleted motion had been

given to its wheels, as that a man should check the impulses by which, at the very time of his formation, the secret artificer intended he should be ever thereafter actuated and biased. Seduction is a chimera : I affirm it to be impossible that even an idiot should be seduced. Cohabitation is the mere blending together of two wills ; and if there is a mutual acquiescence, how can a single charge be afterwards made or supported ? —

Tab ~~Woman~~ repines not at the act, but she knows the prejudices and hypocrisies of society ; to keep herself above the waves of contempt, she therefore puts on the customary garb of penitence, which, by the bye, is nearly threadbare ;

threadbare ; and turns her accusations against him who only participated in, and acceded to a joint proposition and corresponding instinct." —

Youth is credulous : I listened to the voice of a man whom many had called a philosopher ; and though I did not immediately feel the force of his observations and sentiments, yet a repetition of them, and a continuation of his theories afterwards strangled the monster Conscience ; and, expelling the gloomy ideas of my mind, I again began to seek for the pleasures of the world.

Still there were moments in which I pitied poor Josephine, and mournfully reflected on her premature death ; my tutor, however, told me that it was weak and absurd to wrap the heart up in sorrow, and voluntarily to cloud the intellectual brightness for a common state of mortality, to which I might myself be reduced before the re-appearance of the sun. I fell into the hands of a pernicious, dissembling villain, and my progress in vice you are well acquainted with : my follies my connections are known to you ; my heart would sicken at a repetition of them.

An annual sum has, till within four years past, been paid to the mother of Josephine; the last tender, however, was rejected, though I have never enquired into the cause of it. It was not till lately that I discovered any beauty in virtue; and my sandals are yet covered with dust collected in the road of vice. I should suppose that the Rector and the mother of Josephine have ere now retired to a happier world. My son I never saw; his fate I never had the humanity to enquire into, and scarcely have I thought of him.

Dear Stendal, learn the situation of the poor lad, and apprise me of it.

What if he has been reared in ignorance? The event was adventitious, and he is not less entitled to kindness and support. I would do something for the son of the sweet Josephine; find him out; tell him his father wishes for, and will promote his prosperity; and also that a sufficient sum of money shall be advanced for that purpose, and be at his entire direction.

I beg you not to mention my name; you may, however, state my quality, and acknowledge that the character I passed upon his mother and the humane Rector was fictitious. Yet, on reflection, I see not the necessity of this confession; but do as you like, and think

think proper. The boy is doubtless ignorant, has been inured to labour; and, as agriculture has probably been his employ, I will purchase for him a farm, and at some future period cast my eye upon the cultivator and produce of it.

Ah Stendal ! I can never do justice on earth. My eyes are open to the worthiness of Christiana ; but they are not shut upon Isabella and her daughter.

Altenburg.

Count

Count Stendal to the Baron.

THE Rector is still living; and every soul in the village rejoices at the prolonged existence of such an excellent being. The ashes of Josephine and her mother repose together; four years have passed by since the latter entered the grave, over which she had long bent with an aching heart, and with an eye of sorrow; the rustics speak compassionately, affectionately of them both. Your assumed name is still remembered, still execrated! You know my love of truth; I flatter not—I tell no lies!

I have

"I have seen your son. The village is very small, and thinly inhabited. I sought for your boy among the cottagers; and seeing a healthy lad following a plough, I asked him whether he was the son of Josephine."

"No," he answered; "I wish I were."

"Do you know him?"

"Oh yes, very well."

"Has he left the village? Is he still living? Can you, young man, direct me to him?"

"Enquire of those who are coming across yon meadow," said the labourer, abruptly leaving me.

I looked

I looked towards the place to which he had pointed, and saw an aged man leaning on the arm of a tall and elegantly formed youth. Concluding that the rustic had piqued himself on his cunning, and wished to lead me into an embarrassing situation, I did not intend to trouble the strangers with an enquiry concerning a person whose insignificance I thought had doubtless kept him from their notice.

But as I approached nearer, in the elder of them I beheld a venerable Clergyman, and in the younger I fancied that I saw Baron Altenburg stepping back to the age of twenty, and assuming a form and countenance
more

more graceful, more impressive than they had actually been at that period of his life.

This was your son—the son of Josephine—the scion that you planted, but which you neglected to foster. I knew him instantly; astonishment possessed me for a moment; but I was immediately after affected as much as if the youth was my own discarded son.

I was determined to speak to him, though I scarcely knew in what manner. Their slow approach, and my own tardiness, enabled me to collect my ideas: still, when I came close to them,

them, your boy cast upon my face a pair of eyes so exquisitely bright, beautiful, and expressive, that I even feared to name to him the seducer of his mother ;—I could not then do it. I suffered him to pass, strove to follow, but was unable ; and therefore the opportunity of executing my commission entirely failed.

To-morrow, however, I will see and converse with him ; and after my interview, will write to you again. The youth is handsome ; and though I did not hear him speak, I dare affirm that he is wise. The locality of the brain does not prevent it from extending its influence over the countenance,

tenance, which is often infinitely more eloquent than the tongue, the volubility of the latter being frequently poor, compared with the lightnings of the former.

Oh that my little ones may one day be such as your boy now is! And would to God, Altenburg, you could be as happy a father as I am! I shall write to you to-morrow, and I doubt not but that my letter will be earnestly looked for.

Stendal.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

HAVE you seen my boy again? Have you spoken to him? Does his mind accord with the beauty of his person? and is he——

Oh Stendal! how unjust have been my actions—how reprehensible my conduct! Your letter has greatly agitated me—pleased, pained, delighted, and distressed me.—“What ails my Altenburg?” says my wife, while leaning on my shoulder.

“Nothing,” I reply; “nothing, sweet Christiana!”

“Nothing?”

“ Nothing?— Ah now you are deceitful! Why did you start on reading that letter? why fall back in your chair? why laugh? why, almost in the same moment, suffer those tears to flow into your eyes?—and all this is nothing! Ah Altenburg! I will not strive to rob you of your secrets, but I entreat you to be more careful in the government of yourself.”

Dear Stendal! I cannot make my wife acquainted with this last discovery. My present consequence is all derived from her; love, delicacy, and gratitude therefore ought to be ever directed towards her. She has pardoned many of my errors; and her
affection

affection has made her blind to many of my serious faults.

Yet my boy shall be no longer neglected. My fortune is very great: should my wife bring me any children, noble provision shall be made for them; but my newly-discovered son shall be independent, and Isabella and my Augusta—Ah perverse women! why do you torture me by your seclusion?

I could almost quarrel with you, Count, for suffering your sensibility to master you when you ought to have resisted it; and yet your weakness certainly arose from the most amiable propensity.

propensity. May the God, whom the good minister so righteously serves, shower millions of blessings on his aged head, for the care he has bestowed on the son of Josephine and Altenburg!

Write to me instantly, dear Stendal; you may believe that I am impatient, but cannot tell how much so. Take my boy to your heart—press him to it strongly; assure him that—Christiana is coming towards my room; I cannot repulse her; she is too good, too gentle, and too excellent; and she must not see this paper. Farewel!

Altenburg.

Count

Count Stendal to the Baron.

THE generality of men are nearly alike in their construction; Nature does not often evince any extraordinary partialities, though every vain creature of her hands fancies that those partialities are actually to be found in himself. Sometimes, however, we discover some things which resemble peculiar kindnesses in the universal goddess; we see, or fancy we see, them even in infancy, trace them more strongly in ripening youth, and find a full confirmation of them in the meliorated state of man.

This

This trite remark has been drawn from me by the qualities of your natural son, which appear to me of the highest order. His education, I conceive, not to have been a mean one; he has a superior mind and an excellent heart, though you may presently be ready to affirm the contrary; sensibility seems to preside over his soul, and I perceive that he is sometimes guided by enthusiasm.

I have before spoken of his form and features; from his statue a sculptor might catch a graceful Apollo, and his face would supply exquisite materials for an Adonis.

Blaming myself for my irresolution on the appearance of the minister and his young friend, immediately after breakfast on the following morning, I went towards the Rector's house, with the intention of introducing myself in the best possible manner to the venerable old man. But in a meadow through which I had to pass, and sitting on a hillock, I saw your son earnestly, and with apparent pleasure, perusing a book ; and he being the more immediate object of my intended visit, I made towards him, instead of seeking his disinterested guardian.

The

The use of language was at that time scarcely remembered by me, and the manner of combining words absolutely appeared a difficulty. The idea of bruising honour, and wounding sensibility, as well as that of pleading the cause of dissimulation and cruelty (I have written the words, Altenburg), nearly again frustrated my design.

His eyes are almost magical ; there is, not to speak poetically, fire in the centre of each ball, generally beautifully sparkling, but sometimes kindling into the brightest flame. I advanced still nearer to him, when he looked up to me, and on my bowing, rose from the ground, and returned

my salutation with ease and gracefulness. I entreated him to pardon a stranger for abruptly disturbing his mental repast, and that he would not accuse me with impertinence if I begged to know his name.

With some little appearance of surprise, but without any intimidation or embarrassment, he immediately answered, "Leopold Warndorf."

"So I had conjectured," I said; "and you are the person for whom I was seeking."

"For whom you were seeking?"

"Yes. Will you allow me a few minutes' conversation with you?"

"Readily,

“Readily, Sir,” he answered ;
 “will you go with me into the house
 yonder ?”

“With your permission,” I said,
 “I will speak to you here ; for the
 present summer has not given us a
 finer day, and I am loth to lose an
 hour of it. My motive for now ap-
 pearing before you is an important,
 but a painful one. I have perused
 your face, young gentleman, and
 formed a most valuable opinion of
 your heart ;—but to that heart, what
 I am about to say will, I fear, give a
 severe, though not a mortal wound.”

“You alarm me !” he cried ;—“I
 guess at it : you bring me ill news,
 perhaps fatal news of my friend

Charles! His iron-hearted parent has probably carried his rage and malice to their extremities, torn him from Elizabeth — imprisoned, murdered him! Heaven! speak your errand quickly, Sir; for you have made me all anxiety."

Had you heard the varied tones in which these words were spoken, the chords of your heart would have thrilled as mine did, though Charles, his parent, and Elizabeth were strangers to you. If this youth can feel so exquisitely in the cause of a friend, Oh how would he have repaid the love and tenderness of a *father*!

As

As this thought was passing in my mind, he caught hold of my arm, and looked impatiently in my face.

“ You are agitated,” I said; “ be composed, for I do not come from the person of whom you speak—he is totally unknown to me. I am deputed to address you by——”

“ By whom ?” he enquired eagerly.

“ One who has much injured you, and is anxious to make reparation; one who is stung by the recollection of his past errors, who loved your mother—who said to me, “ Go to the son of Josephine, and bring him with you to the arms of his father.”

Leopold shrank from me ; he appeared to be falling to the earth, and I clasped his body to save him from doing so. Almost immediately, however, he recovered his strength ; but he looked with a considerable degree of wildness on me.

“ And you are the friend of my father ?” he cried : “ he lives, and you are his friend ?”

“ He lives, and I am his true, his confidential friend, and have been such many years.”

“ Then your countenance has greatly deceived me. We may look on corruption, and pass untainted ; but if we become familiar with it, we must necessarily

necessarily be infected by the putrid juices. The man to whom you allude, has been twenty years a villain; and if you have known him so long, you ought, Sir, to have forgotten him sooner."

"You are severe!" I cried: "your father, indeed, has been unjust—"

"Unjust!—artful, cruel, and designing!"

"But he repents sincerely. He has never seen you; his arms, however, will take you in, his breast cherish you, and his fortune enable you to execute any plan which you may form for your establishment in life. Go with me: I must convey to him

some

some token of his former love for Josephine."

"Love!—Sir, you should have said lust. Carry some token to him!

Why then, go to the church-yard yonder; you will see my mother's grave near the west angle of the edifice; at the head of it is a stone, on which is cut her name, her age—eighteen years! Dig up the earth; you may find a piece of rotten plank, a remnant of the shroud in which she was buried, a bone!—carry these to him—Oh they will be fit remembrancers!"

"You talk wildly," I cried; "you have too much sensibility—indeed you have. You may obtain happiness if you are willing to stretch out your

arm for it. You will hereafter love your father; you will be ever cherished by his affections."

"And if I were to go to him—and if he were to smile on me, which I cannot wish for, would not every gross tongue be ready to exclaim, 'How kind he is to the bastard!'—I knew not till now that I had a father. Leave me, Sir; Oh you have interrupted my tranquillity!"

My heart melted; he burst into tears; but in a minute, with indignation, he wiped them away.

"I can listen to you no longer, Sir," he cried; "and I must not be

K. 6.

rendered

rendered contemptible by my weakness. But perhaps I have—I hope not—I thought not of it before—perhaps I have been talking with the actual seducer of Josephine?”

“No, by Heaven!” I exclaimed; “but if you were my son, I should with pride acknowledge you.”—He bowed.—“Your father,” I continued, “will do the same; and the prejudices of society you will soon disregard. The levities of my friend are gone over, and virtue and honour are now stationed in his heart. He is a man of birth, of rank——”

“Of birth, of rank!”

“Yes,

“ Yes, he has a long line of ancestors, a high station in the world, and his name is ——”

“ Good day to you !” he said, abruptly leaving me.

He would not be recalled, but ran into the house, leaving me surprised and embarrassed, perhaps a little offended. I went back with disappointment, ruminated all the day and half the night on the singularity of your son’s conduct ; and this morning received from him a note which I now transcribe.

“ Secluded

“ Secluded as I have been, retired as I have lived, and little as I know of the world, still I am not altogether ignorant of the forms of society. I am awkward in apology, for the language of fashion is not much known by me; but I entreat Count Stendal, for such I have discovered is the gentleman who took the pains of conversing with me yesterday, to pardon me for some harsh personal reflections which I recollect I then suffered to pass from me. The abruptness of the interview, the astonishment that seized me, and the pangs of my heart, made me almost frantic. My sentiments, in regard to your character, are softened, are changed; but the destroyer of my mother

mother must ever be abhorred by me. If you respect the peace of the human mind, if the happiness of a fellow-creature be dear to you, attempt not to see me again: and I conjure you, by every thing that is holy, never, by words or writing, endeavour to make the name of my father known to me, for I know not what my passions might induce me to act. Convey to him, my Lord, the inclosed letter; and forgive the past rudeness of

“ Leopold Warndorf.”

Thus you see, Altenburg, ends my embassy. I shall offer no additional reflections.

reflections of my own, no advice ; you must hereafter determine for yourself, and as you may think proper. Leopold is an uncommon character ; and I have written, without remark or comment, the very words which were spoken by him.

The old Rector is, I hear, confined to his chamber, and his grateful boy tenderly soothing the infirmities of age. I am obliged to go from hence to-morrow ; and were my continuance here to be prolonged, I do not think I should venture to speak to your son again. But I shall never forget him ! If I condemn a part of him, my admiration will be insufficient for the other part.

part.—Adieu ! I feel most sensibly for you, my dear Altenburg.

Stendal.

*To the Person who twenty Years ago
assumed the Name of Rostock.*

I HAVE requested Count Stendal to convey this letter to you—to you, who, aided by the laws of Nature, brought me into-existence : those laws demand that, in speaking of you, I should call you by the name of father—a name which has often thrilled me when I heard it come from the poorest peasant, from the ignorant who knew not the meaning of a hundred different

ferent words ; but in pronouncing it myself, it stabs my heart, compresses the passage of my throat, and conveys a frightful sound to my ears.

Can I for a moment think you were serious in deputing the Count to bring me before you ; or that, after your heart has been for so long a period incased with ice, the stranger sun-beams of humanity should thaw any of its frozen springs ? I will not believe it.

Suppose I admit the inclination, and reject the impulse ? Thus then, I account for it.

In

In an hour of mirth, when the feelings of no individual were regarded by you—when the prurient sensations of your own heart made you indifferent to the aches and contortions of others—when your goblet sparkled to the eye, and the fumes of your potent libations were mounting, and creating a wild revelry in the brain—when, perhaps, a group of noisy Bacchanals laughed around you, you thus addressed the Count :—

“ When you pass through the village you have just mentioned, and which I had almost forgotten, enquire for a boy of the name of Warndorf. Nearly twenty years ago, I gained the
heart

heart of a poor country girl, who, I believe, within a twelvemonth died, leaving behind her this male bastard. Nay, do not laugh so loud, gentlemen, for there is nothing uncommon in it ; though I confess all these things are a little whimsical. If the cub be living, Count, I will humanize him ; and if the seal of stupidity be not too fatally pressed upon his brains, he shall have the management of my hounds, and perhaps sometimes take the end of my table."

Nature ! Nature ! Nature !—gods bounteous and beautiful ! Were I to live a thousand years, my first debts of gratitude could never be paid.

Thou

Thou sawest me helpless and abandoned, left by a dead mother, and forsaken by an unnatural father ! but thy animating and inspiring breath came upon me from the woodlands and forest haunts ; thou gavest a vigour to my body, and a spirit to my soul ; one of which affliction has never aimed at—the other, exquisite gift ! has been often subdued by the wrongs of my lost parent, but never shall be affected by the hypocrisy and cruelty of my living one.

My Lord, I am not for your purpose. You murdered Josephine, and I will avoid you with the greatest caution. Your name, your actual quality,

lity, and your fortune are alike unknown to me, and may they be so forever ! You deceived my mother with a lie—a complicated, despicable lie ! and Leopold will be ever wary of your artifices.

You told her you would marry her ; you told her you were a merchant. Thinking you might still probably be such, sometimes in an evening, when the grave of Josephine was beneath my eye, a storm has risen, clouds have collected, winds roared, and lightnings darted athwart the dreadful face of heaven : I have gone home, flighted my food and my bed, and alone in my chamber heard the increasing roar of
the

the elements. It has filled me with a sensation of pleasure: what struck others with a panic, gave a warmth to my soul; and while each shuddering individual has thought only of his solitary self, I have been almost unconscious of my own existence, and filled with the idea of my father.

“His ships, the greatest part of his treasures may,” I have said, “be tossing amid the hollows of the frightened sea; the huge waves sweep away the cables and the anchors; the blasts tear the shrouds, and snap the cordage; the crew sink into despair, and the black horrors of surrounding rocks frown upon their terror-stricken eyes.

He

He is among them ! *he* is the saddest of the sad !—Retributive Providence ! let his vessels divide, and his riches sink to the unfearchable bottom of the ocean ! Drench him in the billows ; carry him, shuddering, half way down to death and darkness, and raise him, hopeless of life, on the highest waves ! Fill him with fears, and plunge him in a thousand horrors ; but spare his wretched life, that he may hereafter have calm hours for repentance and contrition !”

Was this language unnatural ? Think from whom it proceeded ; think also of your former actions : reflect on the strength of many of the
passions

passions which Nature gives to us, and of the peculiar circumstances on which I had to ruminate. I am not inhuman; mine is not a savage heart. All God's creatures are dear to me, except my father and those whom vice distinguishes.

My history is a short one.—After my mother was buried, I became the care of her poor, old, heart-broken parent, who passed her hours in fighting for her dear Josephine, and in sobbing and weeping over her infant's cradle. I afterwards had the breast of a healthful nurse to cling to and thrive upon; and I did thrive. The first things which I remember are the smiles

and the kindness of the Clergyman of the parish, who was the godfather of my injured mother ; and my tongue cannot express what he has since been to me. God will give him his ultimate reward.

He educated and made me what I am ; he has taught me how to be happy, and his examples ever coincide with his precepts. When he dies, and the melancholy day is, I fear, very near, I shall possess his little property : it will be enough for a good and virtuous man ; and when I cast away that character, may the insufficiency drive me even to the den of wretchedness and mine !

I was

I was at an early age informed of the circumstances of my birth, and they no longer make me blush. The mother of Josephine was for a long period supported by the seducer, the murderer of her daughter; affliction lay upon her for fifteen years, and during the last five of her existence she never left her bed. Miserable creature! who brought thee to this state of wretchedness? Had she not accepted your money, she must have perished in want.

But after her death, and when the next secret payment was tendered, Oh I was blasphemous!—God pardon me for it! I thought I could have

trampled on my father's heart, as I did on his proffered gold. He could provide provinder for his horse, could chastise his groom for not giving it good attendance, could admire, and almost love it; but he thought it enough to offer his son bread; his happiness, his education, his morals were nothing! Had my body festered on a gibbet, my father would, unpitying, have looked on it, execrated my vices, and swore he had done his duty!—Oh my soul sickens!

I have said enough. I hope I shall soon forget all that now agitates me—forget that you ever made a claim on me; all then will be well again. My
life

life was, before this interruption, beautifully serene; and this little storm must not ruffle all my summer days. My ideas and reflections will, I trust, hereafter be calm and unimpassioned; and perhaps, at some period not very remote, I may cease to curse the seducer of my mother, though I shall never bless him. Think not that you have in me a son; for that name I shall ever renounce, and start from.

Leopold Warndorf.

*The Baroness of Altenburg to Miss
Messein.*

OH, I hope I have not been deceived, Charlotte! I hope what I lately regarded as beautiful realities were actually such, and not the exquisite visions which the mind will sometimes throw before the fascinated eye.

Did I not describe to you my happiness, paint to you my felicities, tell you I was the most joyful, the most animated creature of the earth—that Altenburg was nothing less than the
ardour

ardour of his Christiana could wish him to be?—Yes, I remember that I spoke to you of all these things, and cannot suppress my sighs when I remember it.

From this you will infer that I am unhappy: well, perhaps I am; and perhaps I ought to be so for my fears, my suspicions, and my unjust su. mises. But what magician can strangle the fretful offspring of the brain? Thought will not be impeded in its progress; and the human mind, whether agitated or tranquil, I must ever consider as a democracy.

I find, Charlotte, that I have been wrongly educated:—my preceptors were too soft to me; I have been led into a maze of sensibilities which attack me at every turning; they infuse each moment a poison into my soul which often thrills me with a delicious but dangerous sensation, and frequently shakes me almost to annihilation.

I will alter all these things; I must—it is not too late; and I will hereafter strive to direct myself by new systems and by more determined rules. I am, I believe, too nicely suspicious; I must indeed be so when I fancy that Altenburg loves me not: and yet I have

have fancied this, though I blush, as I ought to do, at my confession of it. The whole store of my affections I joyfully surrendered to him; and if he returns me only half of his own, can I be otherwise than unhappy?"

Let no one smile, or tax me with enthusiasm, or dare to call me a rhapsodist when I declare that my love for him is infinite! I feel it as a friend, as a wife, as a mistress; it is the chief passion of my soul, and I pour it upon him sometimes with smiling, and often with tearful eyes;—tearful! yes—joy is superlative when it comes from a humid source.

“And does he fly from your embraces? does he disregard your smiles? is he fated with joys which he thinks too liberally offered—offered without being demanded, rather than granted on solicitation?”—Ha! are not these your questions, Charlotte? Though you are so many leagues distant, methinks I hear your voice.—God shield me from these thoughts! My suspicions will undermine my reason:—*my* suspicions! no, they are your’s, Charlotte; but they are unjust, indeed they are. Take them to yourself, dear girl, and recant as I do: let me never hereafter think that I had them for a moment in my brain.

* * * * *

I am

I am much inclined to tear the paper on which I have been writing. No, it shall pass; it will serve you, Charlotte, as a specimen of my talents for romance. You will laugh over it as I have done; though few people can be sportive with their own errors and absurdities, I protest I have been so over mine.

I certainly have freed myself from a strange humour; its singularity surprises me, and I wonder that I should ever fall in such an one, so degrading to myself—its consequences so injurious to my beloved Altenburg. I ask your pardon for having forced the monsters of spleen and discontent into

your company, and promise to shew myself to you hereafter as a more rational and considerate being. I protest I am not only angry with, but, also ashamed of myself: I have told you already that I have laughed over my own folly, and must confess that I have likewise wept over it.

Many times have I been on the point of casting myself at Altenburg's feet to implore his pardon; but it may be better to conceal the weakness of my heart and understanding. I have, however, sobbed out my girlish sorrows on his beloved breast, and been hypocrite enough when, with a soul-dissolving voice, he has said, "For
God's

God's sake, my dear wife, tell me from whence arises this distress!" to impute my unjustifiable sorrow to a remote and inconsequential cause.

Charlotte, my grief has been self-imposed, and my pains were not more severe than I merited. All my concern has been excited by an impertinent curiosity, and by some absurd remarks on the countenance of my husband. Because he received a letter which startled him, and because my too scrutinizing eyes discovered a few contractions in his face, I must take into my bosom a large share of multiplying doubts; and conduct myself

myself more inconsiderately than I ever did at the age of thirteen!—Strange, misguided, infatuated Christiana!

Surely I was not till lately a versatile character. That I am such now, even to a degree of absurdity, this letter will probably evince. Pardon, however, dear girl, the errors of your friend, of which no one can be so truly sensible as herself.

Christiana.

The

The same to the same.

THE quiet of myself and of Altenburg was interrupted yesterday by the appearance of the old Baroness of L——, who is going on a visit about ten leagues from Brinn. She had necessarily to pass our chateau; and I was walking with my dear Altenburg over the grounds, holding some of the tenderest conversation since our marriage, when we were met by the Dowager. You know I do not esteem her, that I think her garrulous and highly censorious; and if you recollect the manner in which she talked to me
at

at Vienna, and my resentment on that occasion, you will perhaps be surprised that she should ever seek another interview with me.

But there are women whom no circumstance whatever can abash. Her Ladyship was perfectly at ease; she addressed both the Baron and me without any embarrassment, and declared herself extremely happy in meeting us, though the rencounter was owing to chance alone.

The wheel of her carriage had broken within a league of the chateau; and on learning that we were then residing there, she thought she could
solicit

solicit of us the hospitality of a night, and till the vehicle could be put into a proper condition for travelling.

Altenburg gave her a polite welcome, and I followed his example, though the eyes of my husband declared that he thought me unusually ceremonious.

I have never acquainted him with the nature of the last interview between me and the Baronefs; did he know what sentiments she then expressed relative to him, he would doubtless catch some of my reserve, and also act upon it.

Our visiter's tongue was, till we separated at night, in constant activity; her anecdotes tire with their multiplicity;

multiplicity ; her remarks are severe, often unjust, sometimes indelicate : and having lashed the vices of society, she concludes with thanking Heaven that she has no such propensities. She is proud of what she now pretends to be, and has no recollection of what she was.

I must own she possesses a considerable degree of discrimination in some particulars ; and this morning she ruffled me very much. After breakfast my Lord went out, and the Baroness accompanied me to my dressing-room ;—seating herself near the toilet, she looked earnestly in my face,

face, and smilingly held out her hand to me.

“ I perceive,” she cried, “ that you are yet harbouring an idea of things which are past ; you have not forgiven me for what, in the warmth of friendship, I said to you at Vienna ; your formality to me declares it. You must give me your pardon for the unintentional offence ; you must not bear enmity any longer about your heart ; assure me that you will not, my dear Baroness.”

In the preceding minute there certainly was cause for her suspicions ; but it fled on the instant, and her words,

words, and her peculiar manner of speaking touched me sensibly; and taking the hand she proffered, I assured her that her surmises were entirely groundless.

“I rejoice then,” she cried, “in my deception, and in the afternoon shall pursue my journey with a greater degree of pleasure and satisfaction. Yet how much would that pleasure be increased, if I were to depart with the assurance of your being happy.”

I started; my face glowed, and I looked strongly at her.—“If you were to depart with the assurance of my being happy!” I exclaimed; “good
Heaven!

Heaven! am I not so? Do you doubt it?"

"Ah no!" she replied, "I have no doubts: mine is an unpleasant confirmation. I protest your situation creates an interest; your infelicity excites regret, it does indeed. Dear lady, what can thus disturb your peace?"

"You astonish me," I cried, "by your conjectures! I assure you I am most truly happy."

"Ah!" cried the Baroness, shaking her head, "those who possess true sensibility are loth to make any person uneasy by recounting their sorrows. You happy! would to God you were! You have, since I came hither, been
acting

acting with a delicate hypocrisy : you smile, you laugh, you talk, and attempt to appear as if all were tranquillity and joy in your heart. But I have observed you with a friendly earnestness. The tide of your blood is strangely irregular ; for it rushes into your cheeks, and then rapidly forsakes them, leaving them almost deadly pale. You often fix your eyes on a particular object ; they moisten even while you are smiling : and when you join in a calm common conversation, your voice falters, and you are in an absolute state of trepidation."

I knew that she described me as I actually was, but had thought

myself secure in my follies, and was vexed by her remarks, though I endeavoured to crush them with a laugh.

“Nay, this is still worse, my dear young friend,” she continued; “these tones are far from being natural; and your present mirth is an *effort*, not an *impulse*. I ask for no confidence, but would entreat you to be more attentive to your health and happiness. Believe me you are strangely altered of late; your new complexion really astonished me when I met you yesterday. You have a beautiful seat here; the building is noble, the grounds are delightful;

delightful ; but pray is not the situation rather unwholesome?"

"I have never heard it so called," I replied, in sickness and confusion ; "my own opinion was always contrary."

"Your own opinion, I fear," she said, looking more earnestly in my face, "your own opinion, I fear, has been wrong. And then, my good friend, the Baron—Heaven, what a melancholy change!"

"Good God!" I exclaimed, incautiously, "are then my suspicions true? Tell me, Madam, does my Lord *really* look unwell?"

"Very much so, very much so indeed!"

"And

“And—does he appear to you unhappy?”

“It strikes me that he is *most* unhappy : a secret misery seems to prey upon him ; and yet I dare say you are in his confidence ?”

“Oh no, I am not !” I cried ; “he places no trust in me : if he be mentally afflicted—”

“He certainly *is*.”

“Then,” I replied, deeply sighing, “the cause is unknown to me.”

“Strange !” cried the Dowager, “very strange ! that recently married to a woman who (I compliment not) was so extensively admired and solicited, he should sink into visible distress and melancholy, without assigning

any cause for the change—it is most extraordinary! I knew the Baron almost twenty years ago, and happened to be at Venice when he first became acquainted with——Bless me! when he first appeared, and was known in that delightful place. He met with admiration every where; a constant smile sat upon his face; and when in motion, he displayed the airy graces of a Mercury.”

“I have heard,” I replied, “that he was of a lively disposition.”

“Lively disposition!” said the Baroness; “he was truly the son of vivacity, the polished mirror of elegance; and till a little while, a very little while, he has not abated a scruple
of

of his fascinating ease and gaiety. But the change in him is more alarming than that which I have discovered in you, my dear young friend;—pale-ness, flushings, visible anxieties, and unseasonable musings! I hope his Lordship will not long continue in a state which appears to me actually alarming.”

I could not bear to hear any more; besides, I began to suspect some unfriendly designs in the woman who so ingeniously tortured me; I therefore left her, and have since been writing to my dear Charlotte. I am, I believe, much too credulous. The Baroness, I am persuaded, wishes to vex me;

but indeed Altenburg is unhappy, and I consequently am the same. I had regained much composure; but the remarks and insinuations of this pretended friend have disordered me again.

* * * * *

What am I to think of the conduct of my husband? Dear friend, what am I to think of the pain and mystery of my Altenburg?

Politeness would not allow me to be long absent from the Baroness; therefore I put aside my pen, which had almost run before my thoughts, and met her in her dressing-room: we

afterwards went into the apartment in which we had breakfasted, and within a little time were joined by the Baron, who had just returned from his walk. He addressed us in no very lively manner; and my eyes encountering those of the Baroness, I perfectly, though with pain, read their language, and could scarcely restrain my tears from shewing themselves. Our visiter, asking a number of questions, each of which related to a different concern, and receiving from my Lord sometimes a languid answer, and at other times only a monosyllable, viewed him attentively, and exclaimed, "Bless me, Baron! you certainly are not well?"

"I acknowledge," he replied, "that I am not very well."

"My God!" I cried, "what is your malady, my dear Altenburg? You alarm me by this confession. Take advice immediately; let me dispatch a servant for—"

"Softly, softly, my good, my tender Christiana!" he said, catching hold of my hand, and pressing it with tenderness; "this mighty affliction is nothing more than a pain in my side; and as I intend within a few days to give my arm to the lancet, I do not suppose that I shall long have cause for complaint."

The

The Baronefs looked at me again, and I thought increduloufly : but the preffure of my Altenburg yet thrilled my nerves ; and his kind, his exquisite fmiles raifed my love, and totally vanquifhed my fufpicions. His fpirits feemed to acquire a fudden vigour ; he fpoke in a ftrain almoft lively, and fmiled at the manner in which I had expreffed my fears. My wounded heart feemed to take in a moft delicious balm ; but the gravity of the Baronefs increafing as that of Altenburg relaxed, in an infant I was again torturing myfelf with conjectures, and faid fecretly, “ The cool difcernment of this woman is faithful and juft ; ſhe calmly views and

examines what tenderness and love close my eyes upon."

I again grew uneasy, and was so much under the influence of Lady L——, that her nods, her shrugs, and gestures, which, though observed only by myself, were plentiful, filled me with doubts, tremors, and apprehensions. At length a servant came in with letters which had just arrived from the post-house at the next town. The Baron saw the man at the door, and starting from his seat, rushed forward, seized the different packets with a strange anxiety; and having looked at the superscriptions, his face crimsoned, and he placed himself hastily,

or

or rather seemed to fall upon his chair.

“Your side, my Lord?” cried the Baroness; “I fear it is extremely painful.”

“No—yes,” he answered, and was again rising in order to leave the room; but Lady L—— begged him to use no exertion, and to break the seals without apology or ceremony. Seeing him gaze strangely on the letters, and singularly irresolute and undetermined, she beckoned me to retire with her; but before I could get upon my trembling limbs, he had risen, bowed, and withdrawn himself.

The Baroness ran up to me.—“Do you see,” she cried, “do you not perceive it? Ah! dear friend, compassionately, most compassionately do I feel for you!”—I ought not to have listened to her;—so however I did; and I am grieved to confess that, when I should have exerted all my strength of intellect as well as of body, I suffered both to forsake me, and wept upon a breast which perhaps contained a guileful enemy.

Within a few minutes, however, the impropriety of my conduct struck me; and raising my head, I freely confessed to her that I deemed my weakness and folly contemptible. I
saw

saw her labouring for an arrangement of features to correspond with some smooth-tongued speech. This artifice, palpable in itself, served to rouse me; and I left the room with an assumed composure, though indeed I had little peace within my breast.

Altenburg has since continued in the library—I in my chamber, writing in tears, and troubling my Charlotte with my sorrows; and the Baroness—But I must go to her, or she will draw the most strange and injurious conclusions from the conduct of me and my Lord. I wish I had never seen this woman; I have been fascinated even by her tormentings.

* * * * *

M 6

Thank

Thank Heaven, she is gone! She departed immediately after dinner, and I sincerely hope I shall never see her again: such a woman would banish me from the world beyond recall, if I were to be long in her society. Altenburg partook of our repast, and behaved with so much ease and propriety, that I could scarcely think he was internally agitated, though our visiter evidently seemed to consider him as a polite impostor. When she afterwards stepped into her carriage, she said some words to me in a low tone of voice which I did not fully understand; but I judged that they were insinuations levelled at my quiet,
and

and am now glad that my ear did not catch them.

My husband and I had walked with her across the lawn; and after her carriage was driven away, he drew my arm through his own, and in sauntering with him over the turf, I was really as happy as I had been before the Baroness interrupted my quiet. We rambled till almost the close of day. Discourfing on dear and delicious fubjects, our eyes frequently met each other moft tenderly. My heart fluttered with rapture; my head inclined towards him, and my lips coveted the kifles which he preffed on them. I told him I was glad of our vifiter's departure,

departure, and hoped we should have no more such intruders. He expressed the same wish, and confessed that he had imbibed a sudden dislike for the Baroness.

“ We will be no longer separated, my Christiana,” he cried, “ no not even for an hour. You are so essential to my happiness, that every little minute which divides me from you, becomes a tedious age : you are the life, the heart, the soul of Altenburg.”

What an ecstatic creature I became ! The sun went down in glorious splendour, and the delightful colours of the western heaven were widely stretched.

Surely

Surely no breezes so soft had ever passed over creation; the face of Nature had never looked half so beautiful. It was the most precious hour that had ever intervened in the annals of time! How I secretly praised the great and invisible Spirit! Oh how I thanked my God!

We returned to the Castle: he led me to the library, where I threw myself on a sofa, and his arms clasped me, his breast was my pillow. Neither of us spoke for several minutes; but at length I raised my eyes, and saw above our heads the portrait of my foster parent—"Look there, Altenburg!" I cried; "my mother, she smiles!"

"Yes,"

“ Yes,” he replied, “ at the happiness of her beloved daughter.”

“ At the love, at the tenderness of her dear daughter’s husband !”

“ Her eyes are on us both,” he exclaimed. “ Dear faint, we are both thy children !”

I will say no more, Charlotte. I have no suspicions, no doubts, no apprehensions. The Baroness is a vile tempter, and I was too easily betrayed. My Lord will hereafter account for all those little circumstances which struck me as peculiar ; and if he should not, I never will renew the self-tormenting arts of which I have so recently divested myself.

Christiana.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

THE summer tempest is awful while it continues, and its tremendous bursts and vivid fires may appal the stoutest traveller. But sink not, thundering mortal ! under the weight of thy terrors ; for the labouring clouds will ere long smile over thine head, and instead of the wild lightnings which blaze around thee, the rays of the sun will soon salute thy face again. And if evening be drawing nigh, and thy dwelling is yet far distant, the milder beacon of the night ; and the gems of heaven shall smile most lovely on thee,
and

and thou mayst go forward, musing on the sublimity and beauties of Nature, and no longer trembling for her past wrath and uproar.

I thank you, dear Stendal, for your care and solicitude. Ah, God! how you have pained my heart! but it is now at ease; it is again at ease. For the last two days I have governed myself with a power which I feared I had not been able to assert; anarchy had obtained an ascendancy over reason, but has at length been made to retreat by the force that I had conceived to be entirely unequal to the contest.

My

My son!—I will think of him no more, or rather will feel for him no more. And yet what an extraordinary youth! beautiful in person, rich in understanding, and noble, though eccentric, in sentiment. Oh! he might have drawn my heart into his own bosom; but, assassin-like, he stabs it in an hundred places, still deeming the bloody marks too few! I cannot repeat any part of his letter; I scarcely dare reflect on it; it almost roused me into madness; it made me shudder with a thousand agues, and sent scalding tears into my eyes.

“Curse the boy!” I have exclaimed.—“God pardon me, and
bless

blefs *him!*" I have added in the same moment, and before the imprecation could be registered.

He tells me we must never know each other :—I do not wish it. I have looked confidently on the world for many a year, sometimes encountered the serious form of danger without shrinking ; but I should have no courage to meet the eyes of my son : they would petrify me, convert my body, my limbs, my veins into marble, and fix me a senseless statue for men to gape at. Yet he is a noble fellow ! Why did he refuse the embraces of a father ? Why would he not let me take him in my arms, and while fondly pressing

pressing him, examine the uncommon particles of his heart? Now I wish it not: he is superior to me, and I will not step forward to meet degradation. But I would give all the world, would freely abridge my life if—

Ah Stendal! pardon the weakness and inconsistencies of your agitated friend!—Agitated! I told you just now that I was calm, and so again I presently shall be. Leopold, without my assistance, will, I think, be hereafter prosperous and happy; for it is evident that he possesses rare talents: and when I am in the grave, the excellencies of his heart, and the genius with which he is gifted, will bring him a thousand smiles,

smiles, though the flesh of his father's face be eaten away.

I have thought much of this boy of late : but my mind at intervals has also dwelt on two other painful objects—on those who, once dearer to me, treat me with equal disdain and cruelty. Still I cannot say that I am injured ; I cannot say this youth's pride and inflexibility are deserving of scorn and resentment ; I cannot say the silence and contempt of this woman and her daughter fully entitle them to my neglect and indifference.

Leopold, Isabella, and Augusta !—
can three such characters be found in
existence?

existence? Their circumstances are nearly alike, and their passions similar; were they not so widely separated, I should be inclined to believe that they had entered into a conspiracy, in order to deprive me of reason, if not of life; and sometimes I am half persuaded that they are the agents of Fate, that they have a delegated power over me, and that they are commanded to lead me into madness and destruction.

But they shall not: there is a saving angel near me, who has a ready hand. Sweet Christiana! thou art the good spirit to whom I owe my preservation, and to whom I must confidently look for future protection. I have wronged thee,

thee, love, but will make atonement. Thy smiles are precious, and thou art liberal in bestowing them on thy Altenburg. Oh my wife! as thou seemest to me the most perfect of women, surely thou art deserving of being most happy: yet thou hast lately wept—hast hung in grief around my neck, and sobbed upon my breast!

I was the cause of this sorrow, and will henceforth strive to be the cause of thy happiness:—yes, by my redemption from poverty by thee, by thy soft pitying eyes, by my love, my honour—by the Almighty God, I will!!

This

This is a voluntary, a willing oath ; and while I have life, will I abide by it. Shall I, like an insensible villain, dash from me the hand that so generously saved me ? or, like an assassin, stab the heart that so tenderly loves me ? Every day I feel a thousand self-reproaches for my conduct towards my wife ; and her mild forbearance, the softness of her voice, and her silence on my errors, which must be palpable, make her a thousand times more dear to me.

And I will deserve the blessings that she offers me ; my mind, shaking off its heavy encumbrances, shall calmly dwell on her alone ; and my heart,

putting aside its inconsistent sympathies, shall cling affectionately and devoutly to her while it has warmth and motion.

Altenburg.

Leopold to Charles.

MANY of your letters, my dear friend, have actually frightened me by their violence; but in the last that you wrote to me, there is a tranquillity which has banished every apprehension. It shews you to me just as you were before our separation; at least I thought so when I first perused it, and

and that idea has made me read it over an hundred times since.

In this age of disguise and affectation, when sentiment is dressed by the rules of fashion, and when few will allow that they are without the commodity, and the art of adorning it, a man's mind can be little understood by the style of his epistles ; you, however, are fully known to me, for I have read the faithful volume of your heart, and found it genuine, pure, and unmutilated.

Cherish the stranger Peace, and hold her long and fast to your breast ; she will repay your endearments with

substantial blessings ; and her love at length will grow so strong, that she will never again abandon you. She delights in the ready smile : and were man more grateful, more frequently would her sandals pass over his threshold, and longer would she sojourn in his dwelling.

I willingly allow that the vicissitudes which have of late awaited you, were sufficient to discompose the calmest temper, and to trouble and afflict the firmest heart. I am often inclined to disbelieve the tales and legends of the extraordinary strength of the human mind ; many of those of antiquity I deem fabulous and, absurd :

absurd:—in such situations man can be the only judge of himself; for bystanders and observers must be incompetent, and not know any thing respecting that on which they attempt to decide.

I am bending over a dying friend; I shew no grief, heave no sighs, shed no tears. What impulse, therefore, governs my heart? What ideas have I in my mind? I am consoled by the knowledge that every other mortal must go the ways of the departing soul, and my thoughts are becalmed by the sweet assurance of immortality? No such thing: whatever my countenance may express, whatever philo-

fophy it bespeaks, my heart is pierced to the centre by anguish, and a stream of blood seems to flow from it in extreme pain. Those who are around me praise, and are ready to proclaim my superior wisdom and fortitude, while I know myself to be the most imbecile and wretched creature in existence.

The best written piece of biography must for reasons like the present, contain many errors, if it be not the performance of the very person of whom it directly speaks: and allowing it is so, we shall more readily admit the incidents than the sentiments; the actual resuscitation of ideas is, I think, impossible;

we

we may indeed conjure up a shadow,
but the substance is for ever gone be-
yond recal.

I am, however, wandering; strange
that it must be always thus with me!
Should I ever attempt the task of a
poet, I must avoid touching on the
epic and dramatic, having so little
knowledge of the unities.

I congratulate you, dear Charles,
on your present state of mind; and
the description of your situation, and
of the manner in which you are pass-
ing your days, is truly pleasing. In
the warmth of imagination I have
transported myself to your quiet

N 4. dwelling;

dwelling, have walked with you in the
 surrounding groves, held converse
 with the first friend of my heart, and
 heard the sweet voice, and also seen
 the sweeter smiles of his Elizabeth.

How unenviable is that mind which
 has no powers for such excursions !
 The very visions that cheat us are de-
 lightful ; and knowing them to be too
 splendid for reality, and too happy to
 be changed into the certainties of life,
 we see them disappear without any
 extraordinary regret, and again in-
 dulse ourselves in mental forcery.
 Since you left the neighbourhood, I
 have cultivated no society, formed no
 connections whatever ; but I have
 severely

severely felt the loss of your friendship: and when I turn my eyes on him who banished you from hence, for uniting yourself to youth, to innocence, and to loveliness, in opposition to a stubborn will, I can scarcely smother the strong resentment that lodges in my breast.

Some few days ago I met your father in the coppice, where you and I have so often, and so happily walked and talked.—

Solitary, discontented, self-afflicted mortal ! if thou wouldst but bring thyself once more to strain thy son to thy heart, and press thy lips on the rosy

face of Elizabeth, thou wouldst no longer appear wrapped in the glooms of winter, but with all the radiance of autumn gleaming around thee.—

I bowed to him, but did not speak; he saluted me in the same silent manner, and passed on. My eye, however, was much deceived if it did not see a faint smile steal upon his cheek—a smile which may hereafter diffuse over the whole countenance, and which also may, at no long distance of time, beam upon my deserving friend and his beauteous wife. Yes, I anticipate the time when your offended parent will call you back with a thousand times more joy than

if

if you had never been separated, when you will be reinstated in all the honours which it was once his command should wait on you, and when the *fête* of the happy tenantry, and the merry peal of the village bells shall celebrate your return to your native shades.

I indulged these reflections last night near the walls of the castle, and directly under the window of the chamber which you used to occupy. The season was as delightful as my meditations; the moon was smiling unveiled; the tall trees near the western corner of the building, nodded to the breezes; and the flute of poor blind

William sent some strains of tender sweetness from the door of his cottage :—Ah it was a delicious hour !

* * * * *

After thus calmly thinking, thus calmly writing, can you, dear Charles, believe that I have lately been nearly deprived of reason ? that my heart has been pierced as with a dagger, and that I have alternately sobbed like a child, and raved like a maniac ? *I have.* But my senses are again compact, and I have talked myself into firmness.

At the time of your father's coming to take possession of the castle, and when

when you first were inclined to allow me your friendship, the prejudices of the world, and the distinctions of society were not unknown to me ; and I thought it not improbable that a young man, educated as you had been, might have strongly imbibed those notions which are widely diffused, and generally adopted.

“ I will see whether my conjectures are right, or not,” I said to my guardian, my protector ; “ I will confess to the young gentleman my actual situation :—a repulse at a season like the present I should soon forget ; but were I to meet it after a mutual declaration of friendship, and after my heart had

6 admitted

admitted him as a brother, it might long continue to mortify, to scourge, and to torment me."

When I next saw you, I opened myself; told you that I was a creature of the Rector's bounty, a bastard; the son of a man whom I had never seen, who had abandoned me and my unfortunate mother, and of whom I thought with horror and disgust!

What did you do?—gave me an embrace as strong as if your mother's womb had produced me. What did you say?—"Leopold, by the God whom I believe in, and worship, you shall be as dear to me as if you were
my

my brother !"—Oh Charles, Charles !
 I then wept, and my eyes even now
 are growing blind with tears. My
 generous Charles—exemplary friend !

* * * *

These passions must not have such
 domination ; for on the ceasing of
 every fit, I think my heart is more and
 more impaired !

* * * *

Well !—This father of whom I
 have spoken is, I find, still living—is a
 man of rank and fortune, and not
 what he declared himself to be when
 he ruined, and gave the death-blow to
 my mother. After a silence and
 neglect

neglect of nearly twenty years, during which time his pursuits may have been in the highest degree vicious and disgraceful, he has offered me his protection, and sent an ambaffador to bring me before him. I was astonished, nearly mad, for a while I believe *actually* fo. I thought that I had received an invitation to league with a murderer, and recoiled from it with indignation !

I never knew my mother, but her wrongs have been told me by my dear benefactor ; and he has fpoken of her in fuch terms, that my heart for her has become all love and tenderness. I fcarcely difbelieve in fpirits. Laft
night

night she rose from the grave, and smiled on me. I was alone in the church-yard—the hour late. Last night I saw her; my substance was too gross for an embrace; but her arms were opened. It could not be merely fancy!

I must now attend my venerable friend, who, I fear, has but a little while to live. Though the functions of life are nearly put aside, and though the renovating spirits of immortality are at hand, yet I shall follow his body to the grave with sadness, and sigh for him many an hour in the days of winter. But his ashes will comingle with those of
his

his god-daughter—with those of my mother.

Soon, dear Charles, I will write to you again more fully, and I hope more calmly, though I felt no discomposure till within a few minutes. Farewel ! a kind farewell to you and Elizabeth.

Leopold.

THE

THE story has hitherto been told in the epistolary form ; but the author begs his readers to take the remainder of it in the manner of narrative. His adopting the latter style will not, he trusts, be deemed injudicious, or less interesting :—his characters are shifting widely ; and as some of the principal ones have long been silent, and somewhat obscured, owing to the difficulty of making them form a natural correspondence, he is inclined more strongly to alter the original plan of the performance. Whatever the opinions of other Novelists, or of readers, may be,

the

the writer of these sheets does not remember to have ever read a single work of imagination in letters, which might not have been improved, and made to appear more probable; consequently more interesting, had the author been less uniform, and occasionally spoken for himself.

Besides, not to anticipate, when friends part, and are afterwards divided by foreign lands and seas, letters become more rare, and are transmitted more tardily: ships are not often so exact in their arrivals as our inland mails; and the children of Astræus are seldom so accommodating as a single postboy. The rules necessary
to

to be observed in a Novel and in a drama are nearly similar. What chance of success would a modern playwright have, if he were to transport his personages as Shakspeare has done in most of his enchanting pieces? Perhaps it may be augured, that when a modern poet shall discover the strength of sentiment, the grandeur and beauty of imagery which distinguish the British idol, an audience will forgive the magical migrations, the inconsistencies of time, place, and action; and not only allow him to skip across the Channel into France, but also to step from Milford Haven to Italy in the shifting of a scene.

* * * * *

Some

Some few days after Baron Altenburg had written his last letter to Count Stendal, he and the Baronefs returned to Vienna. They were thus suddenly recalled by letters from Grotz, which announced the arrival of a lady of the name of Gardiner, who had been admitted into the house as a relation of the family, and who, since her coming thither, had been much indisposed, and very solicitous to see those friends for whom she had a considerable time been seeking.

The Baronefs did not recollect the name, which sounded foreign to her ear; the intelligence of the steward, however, highly interested her; and
on

on her return to Vienna, she discovered, in the supposed stranger, the only surviving sister of her late mother. She really felt the pleasure she expressed ; for she had long concluded her aunt to be dead, and had heard, several years previous to this meeting, that Mrs. Gardiner, then bearing another name, had been lost in a storm near Barbadoes.

The life of this relation had been, indeed, a strange mixture of successes and mischances ; but as this book is not intended as a vehicle for episodes, it will only be said that the person newly introduced to the notice of the reader, had recently stepped into a state of
second

second widowhood, and was soon going to England to receive a large fortune, which her last husband, a native of that country, who had been a merchant in India, bequeathed to a truly excellent wife.

The tender, the studiously humane Christiana served to remove the indisposition of her aunt, which arose partly from fatigue and anxiety ; and Altenburg was pleased in the discovery that had been lately made. But the necessity of Mrs. Gardiner's early departure was very displeasing to her niece ; and as neither the journey could be protracted, nor the regret put aside, one morning when they had
been

been in Vienna somewhat more than a month, Christiana entreated her Lord to go for a while to England.

Altenburg, not expecting such a request, started on her making it, and was inclined to opposition; but the petition was urged again with a thousand new smiles, and granted by him with a thousand new pleasures, though every one of them was quick in dying.

The Baronefs and Mrs. Gardiner were delighted with the acquiescence of Altenburg; but he, going soon after to the library, found that not a

single ray of their happiness had been diffused in his almost comfortless breast. He paced the room in great disturbance, and folded his arms, as if by that means he strove to alleviate some inward pain. Having murmured a few words, but what they were he scarcely knew himself, he took from his bosom (was he culpable for the act?) a miniature of Isabella.

He did not immediately bestow on it any particular mark of favour; on the contrary, he held it at some distance from him, and looked on it only with the eyes of pity. *He held it at some distance from him*; but a more than common thought seemed to

strike to the center of his brain ; and he hugged the resemblance of her who was once so dear, so precious to him, as if he wished to incorporate it with his heart.

He wept a flood of cruel tears, and burst into many exclamations, denoting pain and wretchedness.

“ And must I leave thee ? ” he cried, gazing on the picture of Isabella ; “ must I leave thee and our daughter, our innocent child, perhaps to perish for want ! These eyes smiled on me seventeen years : so long did this lovely bosom bear within it a true and ardent love ; so long were these

delicate arms thrown with a dissolving tenderness around my neck. Yet I left thee—in a moment of womanish fear I left thee! And while thou wert journeying on the road of grief and disappointment, I was posting, on the wings of a new-created love, to the goal of wealth and pleasure. Base, hypocritical Altenburg! Unhappy and neglected Isabella! thou mayst be compared to a tree, which was beautiful in its blossoms, and delicious in its fruit;—I looked, admired, and feasted; till, by repeated thefts, and by the boughs being too rudely shaken, they became stripped, and were incapable of bearing bloom, nay, even of putting forth their leaves. The fated
robber

robber fled, but not till he had carved upon the tender rind his infamous and cruel name—the name of Altenburg!”

In such ruminations as the foregoing, and with his mind frequently reverting to the extraordinary son of Josephine, passed his time till the arrival of the day on which he left Vienna; nor could the bustle, occasioned afterwards by the embarkation for England, rout the strong images from his mind. Christiana often smiled on him, and as often did he press her to his breast; but he frequently stole away from her for a few minutes, and going to the stern of the vessel, looking on the bed of waters he was leaving behind,

behind, and murmuring those names which were never to be erased from his memory, he would indulge the spirit of melancholy : and it was not unusual for him repeatedly to lay his hand upon his heart, and sorrowfully exclaim, " Ah! here is much amiss !"

END OF VOL. I.

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